

JOHN MACDONALD

THE THEOLOGY
OF THE SAMARITANS

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The Samaritan Chief Priest with Ancient Bible Scroll

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JOHN MACDONALD

of Leeds, Eng.

THE THEOLOGY
OF THE
SAMARITANS

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PREFACE

THE FACT THAT Samaritans of pure descent still live makes a study of their ancient religion more than a study of the past. Though they are reduced in numbers and in circumstances and their religious beliefs are largely fossilized, yet there has been a continuity of development over a period longer perhaps than in the case of any other religion. This religion of the Samaritans is in many respects a unique phenomenon. It has evolved out of its ancient forms with the help of ideologies from neighbouring religions, without losing the essential character of its earliest formulation.

This is the first book devoted to the subject, though there are chapters on the Samaritan theology in various general works on the Samaritans, and therefore the author has been confronted with problems of a different order from those normally encountered in writing about a religion. The chief problem has been the availability of source material. Only a small portion of the relevant literature has been published, and much of the rest still lies in manuscripts found scattered throughout libraries and museums of many countries. Microfilms of most of these manuscripts have been available, however, and it has been possible at last to present a reasonably full picture, though in an introductory way, of the theology of the Samaritan religion. The bibliography at the end of this volume will, it is hoped, prove of useful service to those readers who wish to pursue particular lines of enquiry to a more advanced level.

For the historical section use has been made of the best of the Chronicles, herein named Chronicle II, which has not yet been published. Of the works available in text and/or translation full use has been made, but some of these were written at a time when very little material was available and they are therefore out of date, though nevertheless valuable at some points.

The author owes a debt of gratitude to Professor John Bowman of the University of Melbourne for introducing him to the field of Samaritan studies. He is to be thanked also for his labour in assembling a team of research students to translate into English a great part of the Liturgy, the text of which was published over fifty years ago

by Sir A. E. Cowley. Although these translations have not been used by the present writer, they have been consulted and have proved useful as a check on the author's own translations. Thus he has been responsible in every case, except where another translator has been acknowledged, for the translations found herein.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the vital part played by Professor James Barr, formerly of New College and the University of Edinburgh, who first suggested the writing of such a book to the Editor of the SCM Press.

Since this is the first book devoted wholly to the theology of the Samaritans, it cannot claim to be the last word. To a considerable extent it is the first word, and thus should serve as an introduction to the subject rather than the final assessment. As far as has been possible, in view of the paucity of published sources, the author has quoted his material extensively. In the brief studies of the Samaritan doctrines found in various general works such quotation is lacking. It is hoped that with the appearance of this volume many readers will feel a sense of confidence in their own assessment of the theology, now that the sources are quoted and may be consulted by themselves.

Within the confines of these sources reference has been made only to statements of belief that may be regarded as representative of the established path of evolution. Ideas peculiar to particular authors, but not truly representative, have not been discussed, but where these demonstrate trends of interest to students of comparative religion reference has been made to them. Wherever possible (i.e. where there has been a choice) only those sources that are available in print have been used for actual quotations. The Liturgy (text by Sir A. E. Cowley), which represents by far the largest corpus of religious literature, has been quoted more extensively than any other literary source (as 'C. p. 33', for 'Cowley, p. 33').

The reader should note the use of the terms Judaeen and Judaist, the former connoting the Hebrew tribes inhabiting southern Palestine and so called after the dominant tribe of Judah; the latter, a term restricted to the period beginning with Ezra, has reference to the religion of the post-exilic Judaeans. Judaism thus applies to the religion whose origin is that of Samaritanism, but whose path of development from the Babylonian exile was quite different from that of the Samaritans. Furthermore, since this book deals exclusively with a religion that grew to maturity out of the same matrix as

Judaism did and alongside other Near Eastern communities, the term Judaists has been used to the exclusion of the term Jews, the latter carrying with it too wide a connotation.

Translations from the Old Testament are those of the Revised Standard Version, and those from the New Testament are from the New English Bible. It has sometimes been necessary to refer to the Authorized Version in connection with New Testament passages.

I am much indebted to the staff of the SCM Press for their help and consideration, and especially to Miss Jean Cunningham for helpful suggestions and for her careful proof-reading of the volume.

It is hoped that the shortcomings of this work will not be too many and that the reader will be encouraged to delve further into the history and development of what may justifiably be called the world's oldest surviving religion, built up as it has been over no less than three thousand years—and still not dead.

JOHN MACDONALD

Leeds, 1963

ABBREVIATIONS

- ALUOS* *Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society*
AV Authorized Version
BJRL *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Manchester
BZAW *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Berlin
C. A. E. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, 2 vols. (paginated as one), Oxford, 1909
JQR *Jewish Quarterly Review*, London
MPG Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, Paris
NEB New English Bible (New Testament)
N.S. New series
REJ *Revue des études juives*, Paris
RSV Revised Standard Version
TGUOS *Transactions of Glasgow University Oriental Society*
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Leipzig

II

INTRODUCTION

I · THE REDISCOVERY OF THE SAMARITANS

THE SAMARITANS LIVE today, as they have lived for nearly three thousand years, close by their holy mountain, Mount Gerizim, in central Palestine. The small number of families represented at Nablus, together with the smaller group resident in Israel, constitute a total estimated between two and three hundred. At one time they were a large and flourishing nation, exercising considerable influence in Palestine and other countries in the Near Eastern region. The remnant still living are a vestige of the past, although spiritual life and hope has not departed from them. They still cling tenaciously to their creed of five tenets and believe firmly in the main doctrines taught by their ancestors. They yet await the Day of Judgement, when all the persecutions and plagues and other calamities will be more than compensated for, when their claims to be the true representatives of elect Israel will be vindicated.

After so many centuries it is remarkable that they continue to perform, with scrupulous care, the main Passover festival pilgrimage as prescribed in the Pentateuch. Their meticulous performance of this ritual is yet a source of wonderment to tourists in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and many Jews have confessed their admiration of the Samaritans as they carry out step by step the ancient rite of Passover on the top of their sacred Mount Gerizim.

Until comparatively modern times practically nothing was known of the Samaritans, and even today most students of Near Eastern affairs of the ancient period and most students of the Old Testament are influenced by ancient Judaist and Christian beliefs about them. This book will show how wrong many of these beliefs about the Samaritans are and have been for so long. What little scraps of information about them were available to western scholars as late as the early Middle Ages derived from sources which were almost entirely prejudiced against the Samaritans.

If we were to compile today a Samaritan theology based only on Judaist and early patristic sources, we would have to compose a study widely at variance with that presented in this book. The reason for the variance is simply that only now has a proper formulation of the Samaritan theology been worked out from many literary sources of all periods. Before communication was established between the Samaritans and western scholars, the only information available lacked any formulation and no attempt had been made to present an integrated system of doctrines.

The beginning of the rectifying of the situation must be dated to the time of the first travellers in Palestine who reported the existence and practices of the Samaritans. Aside from two rather insignificant references in 1333 and 1357-71, the first important information to reach the West came from Joseph Scaliger, who published the findings of several visits to the Samaritans. He acquired some important manuscripts from them, and in 1590 began a priceless correspondence between European scholars and Samaritans that was to last spasmodically until only a few decades ago; even today western scholars visiting the Samaritans (who are now accustomed to such visits) question them and gain more and more data about their beliefs and practices. Scaliger's correspondence proved invaluable as a starting-point in the building up of a realistic picture of Samaritan life and belief. After him Pietro della Valle visited them several times (in various cities in addition to Shechem) and in 1616 at Damascus he succeeded in obtaining two copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch and one of the Samaritan Targum (Aramaic version of the Hebrew Pentateuch), in addition to some other works.

As a result of his discoveries western study of the Samaritans began in earnest, though the results of study based on so little information could only be tentative. Other Europeans visited the Samaritans later in the seventeenth century, but there was a lapse in contact until Robert Huntington, Job Ludolf and others resumed correspondence. More and more information came from the frank statements of the Samaritans about their beliefs and practices, and in the nineteenth century a good deal was known about these—from the point of view of the modern Samaritans. There was still a long way to go before actual texts of more ancient works were available. In the nineteenth century scholars like Edward Robinson and Heinrich Petermann devoted more attention to the Samaritans, and the latter spent a good deal of time with them, questioning them and studying

manuscripts. As a result of their researches and those of others from various countries, the store of Samaritan literature grew, until it consisted of copies of the Pentateuch and the Targum, exegetical works, commentaries on the Pentateuch, chronicles and some quasi-scientific works. By the beginning of the present century manuscripts of such works were to be found in university libraries, museums and in private hands, all over the world.¹

The twentieth century has seen the ultimate rediscovery of the Samaritans in the wider, historical sense, thanks to three centuries of enquiry and study. The whole text of their Liturgy has been published in a critical edition based on many manuscripts. The Targum has been printed, but a proper, critical text will not appear for a few years yet.² The oldest non-biblical work (in Aramaic), much of which had been published in the nineteenth century by a few German scholars on the basis of meagre manuscript material, now appears in full with complete English translation in 1962.³ Some of their chief Chronicles have appeared with translations into European languages, but these too will have to be re-edited on the basis of manuscripts made available since the first editions.⁴

The greatest single attempt to place the Liturgy on a proper footing after Sir A. E. Cowley's monumental publication of the text was undertaken by Professor J. Bowman (now of Melbourne) at the University of Leeds in recent years. The great bulk of the Liturgy has now been translated into English. The School of Samaritan Studies inaugurated and developed by him at Leeds has continued under the direction of the present writer, while Professor Bowman continues to develop Samaritan studies in Melbourne. The Leeds work goes on and the Malef, a kind of catechism used for the training of the young, has been translated and critically compared with the relevant material in other near eastern religions. Another researcher has examined the ideological background of mediaeval Samaritanism, and yet another has begun to investigate the exegetical methods of the Samaritan exegetes and commentators. These and other studies point the way to a not-too-distant period when Samaritanism will have been thoroughly and exhaustively examined, and it will be

¹ For greater detail on the Samaritans' correspondence with the West up to the end of the nineteenth century, see M. Gaster, *The Samaritans*, Appendix I.

² A complete text, based on the best MSS available, is now being prepared by Dr J. Ramón Díaz.

³ See the Bibliography under Markah (thus spelled for Marqah herein).

⁴ This applies to Chronicles I, III, IV, V, VI, VII, discussed on pp. 45ff. below.

the work of another generation to assess the value and importance of the Samaritan literature and its contribution to our knowledge of the evolution of religion from the Near East, the region which produced three world religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Examination of the three languages employed by the Samaritans in their history, Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic, has been the task largely of Professor Paul Kahle and his pupils of various European countries, and the Israeli Professor Ben Hayyim. As a result of their work, on Samaritan Hebrew in particular, a great deal is known to-day compared to what was known only twenty years ago. The study of Samaritan Aramaic is only in its infancy, but the appearance of two large works in that language, the *Memar* (Teaching) of Markah and the *Targum*, as well as that already known from part of the *Defter* (Book of Common Prayer, the earliest part belonging to the fourth century AD), will undoubtedly lead to fuller understanding of the Samaritan (Samaritan) dialect of a language once spoken throughout the whole of the Near East, another dialect of which Jesus and his disciples spoke.¹

As for the theology, only a few brief sketches have appeared, mainly as chapters in books dealing with the Samaritans in a general way. These sketches are far from illustrative of the true development of the theology, and because they too readily assumed that the Samaritans borrowed (some think indiscriminately) from Judaism no true assessment resulted. In actual fact, the Samaritans did not borrow from Judaism, but rather derived ideas from common sources. This book will show, with illustrations from the most representative literature, that Samaritanism is Pentateuchal religion evolved along lines which have an affinity with Christianity, but with help from ideas current in the Near East over a long period of time.

2 · THE ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITANS

Almost every chapter in books which include a history of the Samaritans assumes that their beginning is to be sought in the events described in *II Kings 17*. This is to ignore the beliefs of the Samaritans themselves about their origin and about the First Kingdom, as they call it, in the time of Joshua. It would not be fair to the reader to present a different approach from that usually presented in a mere outline of the history such as this, and for this reason we must divide

¹ Professor F. M. Cross, Jr. is shortly to publish the papyrus scroll fragments recently found in a Samaritan cave at Wali Daliyeh. About forty documents dating from the fourth century BC are thought to be represented.

our sketch into two parts. The first presents what the Samaritans believe, since their theology is closely linked with their view of history; the second contains the traditional Judæan (Judaist) account, which has been fixed in the minds of almost all students of Samaritanism because it is in the Old Testament. Modern Old Testament scholars, however, have proved that there is a considerable element of polemic underlying parts of the writings of the Old Testament. A comparison of the histories of Israel presented by the author or authors of the Books of Kings and by the biblical Chronicler demonstrates beyond doubt that even two Judæan narratives can differ widely. All this is well known of Israel's history from the Old Testament witness, but what of Israel's history as told by the Samaritans? Have we the right to assume, when there is no proof, that it is more biased or less reliable than the Judæan? Indeed we have not, and it will serve us well to take note of both versions. A true understanding of the Samaritan theology cannot be acquired without some realization of how the Samaritans see their history—even if it is biased! Therefore we begin with a sketch of the origin of the 'true Israel' according to those who have inhabited the territory of Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh from very ancient times. The fact that they have lived there with only one break for so long does not prove, of course, that their claim is correct, but it has as much right as any to be examined.

THE SAMARITAN VERSION

Later Samaritans, looking back on history, perceived in it two clearly defined eras. The first, the era of divine favour, which we shall study later, was the time when Moses led Israel from servitude in Egypt to freedom in Canaan (though he himself did not reach Canaan); this era included the governing of *all* Israel by Joshua and his successors (the biblical judges) up to, but not including, the reign of Samson. Before looking at this period too closely, we have to observe the Samaritan interpretation of God's election of Israel. Adam was created with a portion of the divine light in him, and even after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden that light continued to shine in him and in his successors (the righteous ones of the human race). Because of the evil doings of the unrighteous (the majority) of the world's inhabitants God decided to destroy the world, leaving a pure remnant to start a new era of righteousness. This era, beginning from Noah, is sometimes called the first era of favour after the

Fall, and it included the time of the Patriarchs, the righteous three as they are usually described, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Joseph is added to these, but the essence of the Samaritan conception is understood in terms of God's covenants with the righteous three. Abraham, 'father of a multitude of nations', was a righteous man and God chose him to be the progenitor of a race of men through whom the light would shine brightly, generation after generation. Abraham was the progenitor of Israel and other nations too, and so Isaac alone of Abraham's offspring was chosen to be the 'father' of a particular family of tribes from whom would arise the true elect. Ishmael was rejected and Israel chosen. Thus Jacob Israel, son of Isaac, became the actual progenitor of the elect, the Hebrew tribes. So out of all the Semitic peoples descended from Shem the son of Noah it was the Hebrews who became the elect nation of God.

The story of Joseph and his sons is well known. Joseph was chosen as the inheritor of that part of Canaan later occupied by the descendants of his son Ephraim and Manasseh. As every student of the Old Testament knows, famine led Jacob to Egypt, whither Joseph had already gone. The rise and exaltation of the latter prepared the way for the exaltation in Egypt of Moses. Educated as an Egyptian, he found himself in Midian, where he was to receive his wondrous vision of God's angel. The commission given to him there led him with Aaron back to Egypt, where after much trial and tribulation he was successful in liberating the Hebrews from their slavery. Having led them all the way across the wilderness until he was within sight of the promised land, Canaan, he died and the First Kingdom began under his chosen successor Joshua. According to the Samaritan tradition Joshua established the Israelites in Canaan and allotted the territory to the various tribes as commanded by Moses. Despite the battles that had to be fought, he established Israel in Canaan and the centre of his administration was Shechem, lying in the valley between Mounts Gerizim and Ebal.

The priesthood, descended from Aaron through his grandson Phinehas, established itself on the promised mountain of God's presence, and the country was governed by the High Priest, Joshua being the administrator under his guidance. Joshua responded to the inspired guidance of the High Priest and built a sanctuary on the holy mountain, where all worship of the Israelites was centred. This was in the year 2794 from the Creation.

After Joshua's death there was a regular succession of kings (the

'judges' of the Judaeen tradition; the Samaritan Chronicle II only rarely uses the word) until the death of Samson's predecessor.¹ It is to be noted that the Samaritan chronicles agree in the main with the Judaeen version in the Old Testament that the kings were elected from various tribes, including Judah. Thus there was no Josephite (later Samaritan) hostility to that tribe in the days of the so-called Judges. With the accession of Samson things changed abruptly. It was not Samson who was the culprit, for the era of divine disfavour, which is to end only at the Day of Judgement, was really brought into being by Eli. Eli's sin was that he coveted the High-Priesthood for himself. His covetousness led him to gather all sorts of malcontents to him, and he moved to Shiloh, where he set up a sanctuary in rivalry to that on Mount Gerizim. Thus for a time the Israelites had two sanctuaries and two priesthoods (one descended from Phinehas, the other from Ithamar), and *the first division on religious grounds in Israel was created.* Eli came of the Ithamar branch of the priesthood, and the Samaritans ever since his time have rejected the claims of that branch in favour of the sons of Phinehas. As a result of Eli's defection Israel, we are told, became split into three divisions: (a) the orthodox, followers of the High Priest Uzzi; (b) the followers of Eli; (c) many of various tribes who lapsed into heathenism. In time some of Eli's followers joined the third division. x
cf.
next
p. 22

This split in Israel, occurring long before the traditional division of Israel after the death of Solomon, is important for the understanding of the Samaritan claim to be the true followers of those who adhered to worship on Mount Gerizim under the High-Priesthood of Uzzi and his successors. As we shall see shortly, further splits in the ranks of the Israelites altered the position somewhat, only to reinforce the essential split which in the end resulted in the main division of Judaeans and Samaritans.

Eli's act introduced a new age:

The anger of the Lord turned against Israel. He withdrew his countenance from them and the light was removed from the sanctuary.²

According to Samaritan tradition, God caused a vast cave to engulf the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, and then closed up the mouth of the cave, so that the sanctuary was never seen again and would not be found until the coming of the Taheb³ at the time of the Second

¹ He is called Anitel.

² Chronicle II. Introduction, Section 5, no. 6.

³ The 'one who is to come', the Restorer of all things.

Kingdom. The date given in Chronicle II for this disappearance of the sanctuary is the year 3055 from the Creation, i.e. 261 years after the death of Moses.

During the time of Samuel, who had been brought up at the false sanctuary at Shiloh, religious practices became defiled and spiritual values corrupted. The Philistines took advantage of the Israelite division and consequent weakness to attack Israel. Eli and his followers were defeated and eventually many of them apostatized to the heathen. There was a great gathering at Mizpah under Samuel, when all Israel, except Ephraim and Manasseh and those associated with them from the other tribes, met to demand the appointment of a king. Thus Israel now existed in two main divisions—those who belonged with the Josephites, i.e. Ephraim and Manasseh, with their associates; and those who swore fealty now to a king, King Saul, anointed by Samuel under great pressure from the multitude of Israel. There was also that group of Israelites who had taken to heathen practices and swore allegiance neither to Saul nor to the High Priest of the Josephites.

War now broke out between Saul's newly created kingdom and the community of the Josephites (who can now be called *shamerim*, keepers of the Law),¹ the latter being heavily defeated. The Samaritans who survived were deprived of their place of worship on Mount Gerizim and were obliged to worship in their homes. Saul continued to harass them, so that in the end they moved away out of Canaan and settled in Bashan, east of the Sea of Galilee. In time Saul was defeated by the Philistines and the survivors of his followers turned to David as their leader. The Samaritan version of David's career and that of his son Solomon need not concern us here.² Chronicle II takes Israelite history on to the record of II Kings 25.29 and tells of the Assyrian conquest of Samaria, when the Samaritans along with many of Ephraim and Manasseh and some of the other tribes were taken into exile. The Assyrians sent colonists of various nationalities to replace these. It is clear from the chronicles that there were now three communities of Israelites: the Samaritans, who regarded themselves as a separate body little involved in the politics of the other two communities; the Israelites of the north, chiefly Ephraim and Manasseh with a large admixture from other tribes; Judah with an

¹ The Samaritan name for themselves, the Hebrew *shomerim*.

² Chronicle II covers the biblical historical period and has a Hebrew text almost identical with the Masoretic, a text agreeing sometimes with the Septuagint, Syriac and Old Latin.

admixture of various groups from a few tribes. The northern community in the eighth century BC was thus a heterodox community, which did not include the Samaritans (except geographically), who lived a life apart. Levites were dispersed in both north and south.

Some indication that there is truth in the Samaritan description of the north comes from the words of Jeremiah spoken just before the fall of Jerusalem in 586. According to Jer. 41.4-5 there were men in the three chief Samarian cities who could worship at the Judæan centre, men of Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria. It is possible, of course, that after the fall of Samaria some 'northerners' turned to Jerusalem as the centre of Yahweh worship, as a result of the invitation of King Hezekiah in 726 to join with his people in celebrating the festival of Passover in Jerusalem (II Chron. 30.1f.).¹ According to that chapter some members of the tribes of Manasseh, Zebulun and Asher did join the southerners, along with some of Ephraim and Issachar.

Those mentioned by Jeremiah could not have been followers of the High Priest Uzzi, however, for these existed as a separate religious community (before and after the exile to Bashan) because of their belief in and worship on Mount Gerizim. For such to pay allegiance to the Jerusalem authorities (descended from the Ithamar branch of the priesthood) would have been unthinkable. According to II Chron. 30.10f., Hezekiah's couriers had experienced an unfavourable reception *generally* in the north, and v. 11 states that *only a few men* of the above-mentioned tribes accepted the invitation. These may, of course, have been idealistic 'unionists', who saw a union between Israel and Judah with its religious centre in Jerusalem as a sort of Zionist goal, but they were probably descendants of Eli's schismatics, for whom Mount Gerizim did not possess the sanctity accorded to it by the descendants of the followers of Uzzi, nor could the priesthood of Eleazar and Phinehas's line receive their allegiance as did that of the Ithamar branch favoured by David and rejected by Solomon, as a result of which still further division took place among the Hebrew tribes.

If there is any truth in the Samaritan account, we may take it that the followers of Uzzi (the Samaritans) were the only ones who deserted Samaria in the time of Saul. Those left included Eli's followers, so that the Ithamar branch of the priesthood replaced that

¹ Verse 18 reveals the different northern practice in Passover which today still involves the regarding of Passover and Unleavened Bread as two separate festivals.

of Phinehas in the north, and also included many irreligious people (the third division already mentioned) plus, no doubt, many whose tribal origins were not Josephite; after all, there had been kings of Israel from various tribes, including Judah, and there is no reason why many 'southerners' should not have settled in Samaria, a much more fertile land than Judah, or for that matter any other part of the territory of the First Kingdom. Thus the downfall of Samaria in 722/1 was not the downfall of the Samaritans, or even the ancestors of those later called Samaritans, in the religious sense; it was the downfall of Israelites of many tribes who formed a political unit in the course of time and, especially after the death of Solomon, a political unit enjoying friendly relations with the other political unit in Palestine, predominantly Judaeon, in the south.

The Samaritans have very little to say about the fall of Samaria and the claim of the Judaeon sources that the land was repopulated by the Assyrians with foreigners who practised a pagan religion. As far as the Samaritan tradition is concerned, the followers of Uzzi were taken into captivity. It was after the return of these men under their High Priest Seraiah, called the First Return, some years later that worship on Mount Gerizim was reconstituted. The exact date of this return is not known and the Samaritan chronicles seem to confuse it with the Second Return round about the time of the return of the Judaists under Zerubbabel.

The occasion for the First Return is told by the Samaritans and the account is similar in essentials to that of the Judaeans (II Kings 25f.). According to the former there was a great famine in Canaan as a result of a seven-year drought. Lions and other wild beasts plagued the land, no doubt looking for food and water, and savaged many of the inhabitants. The Assyrian king (name not specified) was approached by a delegation of the inhabitants, who stated their plight before him. Apparently the drought and the wild beasts between them had been responsible for decimation of the starving population. The delegation appealed to the king to send back to the land those who had formerly tilled it successfully. The king approached the Samaritans, who were at that time living in Haran, and instructed them to return to Canaan (Palestine). The Samaritans made it clear, states the tradition, that they could only ensure the favour of God if true worship was restored to Mount Gerizim. They were successful in their demand and were commanded to return and set up true worship there. According to Chronicle II, 300,000 men

(with their families returned. The temple¹ on Mount Gerizim was rebuilt and *the Samaritans never again departed from the promised land.*

It was in the time of the Second Return that the disputes between the followers of the Phinehas priesthood and the Judaists (probably not pure Judaeans by race) started in earnest. By this time (the sixth century) the Samaritan community had established itself and was strong enough to hinder the attempts of Zerubbabel and Joshua to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, after the Samaritans had first sought their permission to assist in the work. The breach between the two communities had begun, and it reached its peak in the time of the second Judaist return under Nehemiah, when the Samaritan community had become powerful enough to have its own governor, Sanballat, who had apparently no less a status than the Judaist governor Nehemiah. The rest of the story of the dispute is well known from Ezra and need not concern us here. As far as the Samaritan historical sources show, the Judaists under Ezra firmly rebutted any Samaritan attempts to press their claims in the eyes of the Persians to possess the true and only sacred mountain and the correct text of the Pentateuch. From now on Samaritans and Judaists are enemies.

THE JUDAEAN (AND JUDAIST) VERSION

The origin of the Samaritans according to the Old Testament is very different from that asserted by the Samaritan chronicles. The starting-point of the traditionally accepted view, hitherto rarely called in question, is the fall of Samaria in 722/1, when the northern kingdom of Israel (i.e. the Josephite territory occupied, according to the Samaritan version, by Israelites of various tribes since the fifteenth or fourteenth century), was ravaged by the Assyrians and the people sent into exile in Assyria. II Kings 17 tells us that the land was depopulated and eventually repopulated with people of various lands by the Assyrian king. The new-comers came from different parts of the Assyrian empire, the largest body being the Kuthites (or Kuthaeans), a name which later Judaist sources applied to the Samaritans in a derogatory way. The colonists brought to Samaria their heathen practices and beliefs. The result of this change in the population of Samaria was the practice of pagan religion, mixed with the Yahwist religion they acquired from the poor peasant Israelites left in the land. Thus the Judaeans claim that the Samaritans were not true Israelites, but syncretists.

¹ More correctly the (ruined) sanctuary first sited by Joshua.

The biblical account of the origin of the Samaritans is well known and the above sketch suffices for our needs. It is to be remembered, however, that the passage (II Kings 17) comes from a time when hostility between Judaeans and Samaritans had already become considerable. It is also to be noted that the name 'Samaritan' occurs only here in the Old Testament, a fact that may make the account suspect as a polemic. The biblical account gives the impression of a wholesale shift of the northern population by the Assyrians and a wholesale repopulation with pagans. This does not match the account of the Assyrians themselves. The Assyrian king who conquered Samaria was Sargon (722-705).¹ This king has left on record his own account of the conquest; in this he tells of taking into captivity 27,290 people.² Now this does not represent anything like a majority of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom, and we have some evidence that this is a valid statement from II Kings 15.19-20. There we can calculate that there were no less than 60,000 wealthy men at least in the country. That depopulation was not complete is further confirmed from another Judaeon source, namely II Chron. 30, which tells of Hezekiah's attempt to establish his reform movement in the north as well as in his own southern kingdom. We are told how he sent messengers to 'the remnant of Joseph' who had escaped from the Assyrians in 722/1. These, we have noted in the Samaritan account, were not just the Samaritans, the followers of Uzzi and his successors, but probably a mixture of people from various Israelite tribes, no doubt predominantly Josephite.

Did the Assyrian king bring in such a large number of heathen colonists from various territories that the people of Samaria could become practically heathen? This is the impression we gain from the Judaeon source, II Kings 17.24, but other Judaeon sources seem to present a very different picture. These sources are from the second part of the Old Testament, namely the Prophets. Israel (Ephraim) is mentioned several times in connection with the period between 722/1 and the reconstitution of the 'southerners' under Ezra at the beginning of the fourth century. As Gaster has stated,³ there is no reference to foreign inhabitants in Samaria. The prophets do not seem to have known of the tradition that Samaria was an impure mixture of pagans and surviving northern Israelites. Isaiah

¹ Not Shalmaneser as we read in II Kings 17.3.

² In his *Annals*, 11-17.

³ *The Samaritans*, p. 12.

(11.12f.) seems to have believed in a restoration of friendly relations between Ephraim and Judah. Jeremiah (31.17-20) speaks of Ephraim as still under the care of God and hopes for unification with Judah (23.5f.).

These prophets, therefore, either did not know the tradition that Ephraim was a 'mongrel' nation or were unconcerned with such a view. For them Ephraim and Judah both belong to God's scheme of salvation for Israel. Still later, Ezekiel speaks of the unity of Israel; in 37.16f. we have the symbolic act of joining the two nations together. As Gaster points out:¹

Thus in c. 580, less than fifty years before the return from the Exile, the prophet Ezekiel still knew of the existence and power of Ephraim, with whom the other tribes of Israel had joined. There is no trace of any doubt of purity of descent or that they were not the genuine tribes inhabiting the northern part of Palestine.

He goes further in pointing out that Ezekiel declared the family of Zadok to be the only one among the priests who had any right to the guardianship of the Temple (48.11). This support by Ezekiel for the Zadokites, who claimed to be true descendants of the Eleazar-Phinehas priestly line (that of Uzzi, not Eli), must be considered important. For further study of the Samaritan claims in connection with the idealism of Ezekiel, Professor J. Bowman's article 'Ezekiel and the Zadokite Priesthood' should be consulted.² Ezekiel, of course, pleads for Davidic rule, but the favourable position he adopts towards the claims of Ephraim must not be ignored in our assessment of the Judaist attitude towards the origin of the Samaritans.

Zechariah (9.13 and 10.6f.) speaks of Ephraim and Judah as both being recipients of God's love. After the exile the Judaist prophets show no interest whatsoever in the northern territory, and seem to have been wholly preoccupied with the affairs of the new community in the south. As far as our purposes are concerned, the Judaean version of the origin of the Samaritans must be suspect. This is not to say, however, that the Samaritan version is therefore reliable. Both communities had much to gain by evaluating and even adjusting history to their own advantage. Only fuller and closer examination of the Samaritan chronicles will tell whether the Samaritans falsified history for polemic reasons, how they did so, and when they became conscious of the need to defend their position to such an

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

² In *Transactions of Glasgow University Oriental Society* 16, 1957, pp. 1-14.

extent. At this stage in our knowledge, it is enough to know the Samaritan account, since it throws some light on their theological beliefs about election, as we shall see on several occasions below.

3 · THE SAMARITANS IN LATER HISTORY

We may now briefly sketch the affairs of the Samaritans from the time that Judaism became a religious system in Palestine, after its development in Babylonia. The so-called Samaritan Schism is often thought of as stemming from this time (late fifth or early fourth century BC), but we have noted other possibilities. What is true is that the breach between the two religious (and in a more limited way national) groups in this period is already complete.

We hear no more of the Samaritans from the time of Haggai and Zerubbabel (sixth century) until the fifth-century Samaritan governor Sanballat tried to stop the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under the direction of Nehemiah. Neh. 13 tells how Sanballat married his daughter to the grandson of the Judaist High Priest. It is often suggested that Sanballat arranged this marriage in order to gain a foothold, political and spiritual, in the affairs of the Judaist community.¹ He no doubt hoped to assert the supremacy of the Samaritan High Priest and of Mount Gerizim over the Judaists' High Priest and their Mount Zion. Nehemiah, however, already hostile to such mixed marriages in the new community, expelled the grandson of the Judaist High Priest and he went to the Samaritans.

There was a serious dispute between the two communities over the Law, as to which version, the Judaist (later Masoretic) or the Samaritan, was the original and true version. Hatred between the two peoples was intense. According to the Samaritan Chronicle II, many Judaeans² joined forces with the Samaritans and the enlarged northern community consolidated its position, with its centre of worship on Mount Gerizim. In the time of Artaxerxes (which king of that name is not stated) the Judaists were oppressed, but he later allowed them to rebuild the Jerusalem Temple and town.

According to Josephus, the Judaist historian,³ the Samaritans built their rival temple on Gerizim only in Alexander's time, about 323 BC. This assertion has recently been challenged by Professor H. H. Rowley, who claims that that temple was built in the previous

¹ For the same reason as he interfered with the Judaist plans to rebuild in Jerusalem.

² I.e. in this instance non-Judaist southerners.

³ *Antiquities* xi. 7. 2.

century.¹ In any case, the existence of a Samaritan temple was a constant source of vexation and frustration for the Judaist authorities until it was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in the second century BC. Alexander much favoured the Samaritans. Ptolemy was impressed by the Samaritan claims for their Pentateuch and requested a copy for his great library at Alexandria. Thus the middle of the fourth century was indeed a period of growth and consolidation for the Samaritan people.

The comparative peace and stability throughout the long period from the beginning of Persian rule until the end of the Roman occupation enabled the Samaritans to become a powerful political force in the area. Their religion had by now become respected in many quarters and on all sorts of matters they were consulted by emissaries from other countries. During this time they increased in number considerably and in New Testament times they held a third of Palestine, occupying a separate province between Judaea in the south and Galilee in the north. Chronicle II speaks of three classes of Israelites during the period before Christ: (1) the Pharisees (the enemy!); (2) the Sadducees (said to be the later Karaites); (3) the Hasidim (said to be Samaritans). These remarkable identifications we must pass over here.

During the Roman occupation the Samaritans had their own council of administration, through which they administered their own internal affairs. They lived with Gnostics; indeed, Samaria was almost certainly the home of some of the most prominent of them, if not the original home of the first Gnostic. Simon Magus came from Samaria; so did the great Church Father, Justin Martyr. There was a Christian diocese centred on Sebaste (Samaria) and it is certain that the Samaritans were fully acquainted with the great theological debates among the Christians in the first centuries of the Christian era. The Bishop of Sebaste was one of the eastern bishops present at the Council of Nicaea in 325.

The Romans had liberated the Samaritans from the severe repression they had endured ever since John Hyrcanus had captured Shechem in 129 BC. On the whole the period of Roman rule, despite some periods of brutal oppression, as we shall note below, was the one when Samaritanism developed most fully and made most progress towards what it became by the seventeenth century. According

¹ In 'Sanballat and the Samaritan Temple' in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 38, 1956, pp. 166-96.

to Chronicle II, which tells much the same story as the other chronicles for the period, Augustus (31 BC-AD 14) was responsible for ending the oppression by Herod. Under Hadrian (117-38) there was severe persecution, but Hadrian became friendly later, so much so that he himself built a synagogue close to Mount Gerizim, and issued an edict that no Judaeans¹ was to be allowed to enter an area around the mountain. Antoninus (138-61) showed favour to the Samaritans. It is perhaps rather surprising that they should speak so highly of one who was in their eyes a pagan, but Chronicle II speaks of him thus:

Then King Antoninus died . . . may his spirit dwell in the Garden of Eden!²

The Samaritan chronicle not only has the Roman emperors in the correct order, but it gives the right length of reigns. It appears that it is largely trustworthy. The dating of the Christian Gospels and Epistles and the list of thirty-five uncanonical Gospels suggest that the Samaritans had informed sources for the period.

Commodus (180-92) oppressed them brutally. During his reign, as during the early part of Hadrian's, much of the Samaritan literature was destroyed, a situation from which the Samaritans have never quite recovered. The ending of Roman rule by 'the second kingdom of the Persians' brought an era of peace. In the middle of the fourth century came the great revival of Samaritan worship, literature and language under the leadership of Baba Rabba. He cleared all foreign troops from Samaria and re-established towns and places of worship. Under his direction the Liturgy was developed, the main contributors to it being Markah and Amram Darah, about whom we shall have something to say in Section 5 of this Introduction. This was the Golden Age of the Samaritan people, an age when the Aramaic language was the medium of everyday communication. The Pentateuch was translated into that language, and the theological hymns of the Samaritans were in the same tongue.

It is hardly necessary to narrate the history of the Samaritans after the Byzantine period; in any case there is little reliable information about it. There were serious troubles for them under Zeno and

¹ The word is used here of inhabitants of the Roman province of Judaea.

² It is to be noted that such benedictions on non-Samaritans are not representative of the normal Samaritan attitude.

Justinian. Zeno destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim in 486¹ and the Samaritans never recovered from the severe treatment meted out to them by Justinian;² his decrees of 528 made their existence as a religious body wellnigh impossible. They were able, however, to use their well-tested and considerable powers of survival, and just as Hadrian had proscribed circumcision in the days before he became friendly disposed towards them and they managed to survive that dreadful threat to their existence, so they survived Justinian's decrees.

They had leaned towards the Persians against the later Roman emperors, and consequently the later eastern Roman emperors had developed a distrust of them. Probably as a result of their hostility, Samaritans came to be scattered in many parts of the Roman world, including such places as Babylon and Rome, parts of Egypt and Syria. The communities that developed in Damascus and other important centres during the Byzantine period settled down and became influential in trade and learning. It is at this point that we may see how Samaritanism came to develop along new lines after Baba Rabba's time. This is important for our understanding of the mediaeval theology, for many Samaritans from the East settled in the area around Shechem in the fourteenth century. As a result probably of the settlement of these 'easterners' new ideas and traditions found a home in Samaria. Some of these were given a permanent place in the Liturgy, and we shall have occasion to observe the nature of them in studying the various doctrines.

The advent of Islam in the seventh century in Palestine almost meant the death of the Samaritan religion. There was considerable repression by the Muslims from time to time. It was then that the Aramaic language gave way before Arabic, and soon almost all Samaritan literary production was to be in that language. Many Samaritans seem to have become Muslims, this further reducing their already declining numbers. One of the greatest burdens they have had to bear on frequent occasions from the seventh century right up to the present time has been prohibition of access to Mount Gerizim. As a consequence of this the Samaritan liturgists developed a secondary type of festival liturgy which took place 'in town' instead of on the sacred site of the original sanctuary.

During the Crusades (the period from 1095 to 1270) the Samaritans

¹ See Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, pp. 110f., for this period.

² See A. E. Cowley, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 8, 1896, p. 568.

seem to have suffered much loss. We know little of Samaritan life and activity during this time, but, according to Montgomery, Nablus (the Roman Flavia Neapolis) almost became the seat of government of the Frankish Kingdom of Jerusalem.¹ Records of the Crusades say practically nothing of the Samaritan community. The battles between the Mongols and Seljuks in the period following the Crusades saw Samaria captured first by one, then the other, with consequent disasters for the Samaritans. In 1260 Hulagu captured Syria, but the Mongols were driven out soon afterwards by the Egyptians. Syria (including Palestine) remained under Egyptian control for the rest of the thirteenth century. Evidence that the Samaritans lived in close proximity to the Christians comes from the fact that Baibars, the fifth Mameluke Sultan of Egypt, in 1261 transported Christian communities from Shechem to Damascus, where there was already a Samaritan community. Thus Nablus and Damascus are two known cities where Christians and Samaritans lived side by side, suffering often from the same pagan repression. It seems certain that Damascus became the centre of Samaritan involvement in Judaist and Christian theological controversies.

The end of Mongol rule in Syria gave Egypt complete dominion, but this in turn gave way to Turkish sovereignty. During the fourteenth century Ottoman rule was, apparently, steadfast and firm, but we hear little of the Samaritans. They suffered like every other community from the Black Death in 1348 and 1362, and indeed there are clear references in the Liturgy of the fourteenth century to plagues and their terrible toll on the Samaritan people.

For the last period, from the fourteenth century to the twentieth, the Samaritans have shared the fortunes and misfortunes of the other peoples in Palestine. At the religious level, they struggled with Islam and were undoubtedly influenced by it in some ways; at the political level they appear to have kept out of the way most of the time, and we have little information about their activities. It would seem that from the fourteenth century they began to live out their day quietly and there was little internal expansion and development, beyond that which we shall mention in Section 5.

Today the Samaritans, divided, as Palestine is, between two countries, are a tiny minority under the aegis of Islam and Judaism, of Jordan and Israel, and they are gradually passing away. The present chief priest is a poor man like his co-religionists, and it is a

¹ *The Samaritans*, p. 132.

tragedy to see how reduced in circumstances a community once so proud and influential has become.

4 · INFLUENCES ON SAMARITAN THOUGHT

Much of what can be written on the subject of Samaritan dependence, conscious or unconscious, on the beliefs and traditions of neighbouring religions, must remain speculative, for our actual knowledge of such dependence is nil. We are obliged to rely on assessment from the evidence of the Samaritan beliefs themselves. Thus this section comprises the findings of some years of investigation into the history of the various doctrines and sub-doctrines, and cannot be described as derived from external sources.

It has become customary for people to assume that the Samaritans were always the borrowers and not the lenders. Thus it is usual to claim that whenever Samaritan literature presents ideas similar to those of some other Near Eastern religion it was the former that incorporated the ideas of the latter. Such a claim is far from proved and no clear evidence has been presented up till now in support of it. Any claim for Samaritan borrowing from Judaism is nonsense, as anyone who has read all the available literary material must judge. What is true beyond doubt is that both Samaritanism and Judaism developed from a common matrix. Both possessed the Law, albeit they were at variance over points of difference in their respective texts of it, and both were evolving in an atmosphere wherein many ideas and ideals were being nurtured. It is the aim in this brief review of influences on the thought of the Samaritans to show how they reacted to these various influences and to point out on what topics they *inherited* concepts similar or identical to those inherited by other Near Eastern religions. We can be sure that the three centuries before Christ and the four after represent a period when a host of concepts old and new were jostling together in the minds of the learned.

The first period for our review is that from the time of Saul (eleventh century BC) to the period of the Samaritan return in the time of the Assyrian domination (eighth century). This is an era about which the chronicles are silent and about which we have no certain information from outside sources. According to Chronicle II the Samaritans (in the religious, not racial sense) were for much of this time not in Samaria. Whether they developed any new religious ideas in their home in Bashan we cannot say.

The second period is that from the Samaritan return (eighth

century) to the Persian period (sixth to fourth centuries), about which the chronicles have quite a lot to say. It has often been thought that the Judaeans (later Judaists) were influenced by the religion of the Persians, Zoroastrianism. Many books have been written which attempt to show how various central themes in Persian religion influenced the (later) Judaist view of God and the world. The Samaritans were no doubt as directly influenced by the ideas of their Persian rulers as were the Judaeans. It was a period of comparative peace for both communities, and there was considerable philosophical and theological speculation in many quarters over such questions as the opposing functions of good and evil, light and darkness. We may well ask if the Samaritan view of history construed in terms of eras of divine favour and disfavour originated in this period. The same kind of belief is to be found in Judaism, Karaism and the religion of the Qumran sectarians, and other sects, and possibly in Christianity, too, with its antithesis of light and darkness (no doubt derived via Judaist channels). Even Islam has been judged to be an inheritor of this kind of dualistic thinking. We have no positive information to guide us on the question of Persian influences on the Samaritans, and the question must remain open pending further information.

The third period is that of the Seleucid Empire (late fourth to second centuries BC), when Samaritans and Judaists found themselves at times both involved in one struggle against the Hellenizing processes at work in Syria and Palestine. The most famous illustration of the Seleucid attempt to enforce Hellenization was that of Antiochus IV (175-164), out of which arose the fierce Maccabaeian conflict. The Samaritans used all sorts of political wiles and strategic devices to avoid being enmeshed in the Hellenistic net, but they suffered a great deal like their southern brethren. For information about early Samaritan writers of this period the reader may consult the relevant portions of Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, and Gaster's *Schweich Lectures* of the same title.

It seems certain that the Samaritans were considerably influenced by the Greek philosophies that became current in Palestine and Syria at this time. The Platonic (and later Neo-Platonic) and Stoic philosophies undoubtedly left their mark on Samaritan thinking, and throughout this book references are made to them where applicable. The chief mark of Greek philosophy left on the Samaritan mind was in the field of the humanities; we may observe ideas with

Greek affinities on the subject of man, his constitution, purpose, relation to God, and so on. (Markah, in the third or fourth century AD, seems to reflect the Greek philosophical outlook more than any other writer, and indeed in his great *Memar* (Teaching) he uses several Greek words, where Aramaic words would have served just as well. Even little enclitics and other common words remain in the mediaeval manuscripts of this work, whereas no Persian or Latin words are found. This linguistic point need not be taken to connote Greek influence on Markah, but taken in consideration with many features of his thought it looks as though Greek influence, in one form or another, did penetrate the theological and philosophical outlook of at least one Samaritan thinker.)

→ The fourth period, that of the Ptolemaic empire (third to first centuries BC), is also well illustrated in the chronicles. In the main this period is marked by controversies with the Judaists, although there were many times of peace and favour for the Samaritans. There is no evidence that the latter experienced any notable change in the influences on their thought. Greek thought continued to dominate the Near East and the Samaritans continued to speculate about God and the world in both philosophical and Pentateuchal concepts. The marrying of these two in some particulars seems to have become complete about this time.

There was, however, one great system of thought (really a related series of similar systems) that certainly influenced the Samaritans. This was Gnosticism, particularly in its so-called Judaist form. The Samaritans were at this time scattered throughout the great cities of Egypt, Samaria, Asia Minor and Asia Major. They had a synagogue in Antioch; there was a large community in Alexandria, and there were communities large or small in many other places. They were thus, in all directions, within the sphere of Gnostic speculations and were undoubtedly involved in many disputes with Judaist Gnostics, just as they must have been with Hellenistic Judaists in Samaria and elsewhere. The real effects of Gnostic influence may have become marked in Samaritan thinking during the Ptolemaic period, but it is more likely that it was in the sixth period that Gnostic terminology came to have a permanent place in the religious vocabulary of at least some Samaritan writers.

→ The fifth period, the rule of the Hasmonaeans (from 166 BC to AD 4) was an unhappy time for the Samaritans, when hostility between them and the Judaists was at its height. We may assume

that in many respects the Samaritans were driven back upon their own ideas, and this would be in all likelihood a period of consolidation and recapitulation. During this time the religious gap between Judaism and Samaritanism probably widened appreciably, judging from the chronicles as well as several non-Samaritan sources. The influence of Rabbinic authority in Judaism was approaching its peak and Judaism moved further and further away from the line of Samaritan development.

The sixth period, when Rome was most active and dominant (from 62 BC to the reign of Herod and then again to AD 135), is the best and most accurately described of all in the chronicles. The Samaritans knew this period better than any other and their dating in the best chronicles is surprisingly accurate. They had detailed knowledge of a scholarly type of the early Christian literature, canonical and uncanonical, and about the political situation in Judaea. Of current systems of thought, Gnostic speculation had some influence on the Samaritans. In many of their writings, even those from as late as mediaeval times, Gnostic terminology is to be found. God is called the Power, the Truth, even *Tohu wa-Bohu* (after Gen. 1.2), and by many other Gnostic-type terms. Yet the Samaritans did not adopt the implications of the Gnostic terminology, as their brethren the Judaists did in some respects.

The rise of Christianity is by far the most outstanding event of all in the period, and it was that religion that was to have the most direct bearing on the way the Samaritan religion was to evolve out of the Pentateuch. This book quotes many examples illustrating the process, leaving the reader in no doubt that Samaritanism is really Pentateuchal religion evolved along lines influenced by Christianity. For one thing there is *Chronicle II's* actual mention of the four Gospels (with dates for three of them), all the Pauline Epistles (complete with dates) and no less than thirty-five uncanonical Gospels, most of which are known to New Testament scholars today, even though that knowledge is based in some instances on fragmentary and modern findings. The Samaritans knew about Christ and spoke of him without any hostility or malice whatsoever. They express neither approval nor disapproval, but merely comment that he did not stand in their way nor they in his. The Judaists, especially the Pharisees, are condemned for their action in having him crucified. In the descriptions of the Roman era the Pharisees, never the Sadducees or Hasidim, are regarded as enemies.

There are some close parallels between the thought of the sect of Qumran and that of the Samaritans. Both have the Day of Vengeance and Recompense,¹ the eras of favour and disfavour;² both speak of *Qushta* (Truth). These parallelisms, however, need not demonstrate any direct association between the two communities; it is more likely that both inherited certain current concepts, which, on the other hand, are usually found somewhere in the vast literature of Judaism as well. Most of the ideas held in common in Samaritanism and in the religion of Qumran, which are not stressed in normative Judaism, are also to be found in Karaite Judaism. The connection between Samaritanism and 'Qumranism' on the one hand, and 'Qumranism' and Karaism on the other, has still to be examined in an exhaustive way. For example, in the University of Leeds School of Karaite Studies many expressions have been found in the Karaite liturgies that reflect 'Qumranism' and Samaritanism rather than normative Judaism. So Karaism speaks of the Teacher of Righteousness and the Messiah of Righteousness (after the manner of the Dead Sea community's writings), and of the day of favour and disfavour and many other concepts basic to Samaritanism. All we can say at this stage in our knowledge is that the Roman rule in Palestine was a period when there was much interchange (not necessarily deliberate) of ideas. The evidence of the Samaritan chronicles will have to be worked out and assessed, particularly the identification of the Sadducees with the later Karaites and the Hasidim with the Samaritans themselves.

It is apparent from the quotations in this book that the Samaritans, at least in later times, were closely influenced by the New Testament. In many passages the debt comes close to being *verbatim* in form. Some of St Paul's Gnostic-style expressions come over into Samaritan thought, and some details from the Synoptic Gospels find a place, too, but it was the Johannine literature in particular that was to exercise a lasting influence on the way some Samaritan doctrines developed. Traces of this already appear in Markah's writings (third or fourth century), but in the mediaeval literature the Johannine influence seems substantial. Why it should have taken Samaritan writers so long to employ St John's ideas and terminology is far from certain, but we may have to look to eastern Christianity for the

¹ E.g. Manual of Discipline 9. 21-26.

² Possibly derived from Isa. 61.2. Cf. Zadokite Document 1. 5; Hymns of Thanksgiving 3. 28, etc., for the Era of Wrath, the Hour of Judgement.

source, or else there are many lacunae in our supply of source material. The Samaritans, it is to be remembered, had a large community in Damascus for many centuries and they may well have found themselves siding with the Christians against the Judaists and Muslims on occasions of theological disputation.

It may be thought that Samaritanism was and is a religion with its doctrines neatly tied up and completely formulated without the existence of variant concepts. This is not true, although it is possible to lay too much stress on Samaritan sects. However, we must take account of the chief sect and consider what non-Samaritan authorities have had to say about it.

The study of the sects is still in an uncertain state, chiefly owing to the contradictory nature of the available evidence. However, we know for sure that there was a powerful and influential sect called the Dositheans, so named after their supposed leader Dusis.¹ The section of the Liturgy known as the Dustan² has been connected with Dusis and the Dositheans, but if the theology found in that section is sectarian or heterodox, then all subsequent liturgical writings are also heterodox or sectarian, because the theological outlook of the Dustan is that of the later liturgical writings in essentials. In that case, too, almost the whole of Samaritan religious literature is sectarian—a belief to which we can hardly give credence!

There are several references to a sect called Dositheans and two different sects of that name seem to have existed, unless the sect changed its views in the course of time. For full details of the evidence for the existence of two sects the reader should consult Montgomery's chapter,³ on which the present writer has been largely dependent. In the second century AD Hegesippus⁴ wrote on sects called Dositheans, Gorothenians and Masbotheans. Another writer, Epiphanius,⁵ spoke of Essenes, Sebuacans (= the Masbotheans?), Gorothenians and Dositheans. From Judaist sources⁶ we learn that two of the priests sent to Samaria by the King of Assyria were called Dostai and Sabbai, and it may be thought that two of the above-named sects derived from these men. Josephus⁷ wrote of Sabbaeus and Theodosius

¹ Called 'the accursed' in some chronicles and priestly genealogies.

² See Section 5, no. 7.

³ *The Samaritans*, pp. 254ff.

⁴ Quoted in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iv. 22.

⁵ *Haer.* i. 10.

⁶ Tanhuma Wayyeshebh s.2, Pirke Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 38.

⁷ *Antiquities* xiii. 3. 4.

(the latter an alternative name for Dositheus) being involved in a dispute before Ptolemy Philometor (181-145 BC), a dispute between Judaists and Samaritans. According to two of the Samaritan chronicles (VI and VII) there was a sect called Dustan in Alexander's time (fourth century BC). However, Hegesippus' list of sects has Dositheus after the time of Simon Magus (Samaritan Gnostic), i.e. first century AD. Origen also has Dositheus in that century.

The importance of the Dositheans is shown by the fact that Hippolytus placed the Dositheans first in his list. This matches the importance and prominence of them in Hegesippus' list for the second century.

Despite these and many other references, we know very little about the sect. What is most problematic is whether the Dositheans believed in the general resurrection or not. Some, according to the writers mentioned, evidently did and some did not. Montgomery was the first to see that there might be two different sects, the later believing in the resurrection. If, as Professor Bowman thinks,¹ Markah was a Dosithean, we are faced with the interesting problem that he did not have much to say about the resurrection, although he clearly believed in the Day of Judgement. Markah may or may not have been a Dosithean, and the Samaritan historical sources themselves are not agreed about this or about his religious affinities in general, beyond the fact that he was a Samaritan, but his general teaching was accepted by all later writers, so that we can feel sure that his position was not far removed from that of the priestly authorities.

The later sect of the Dositheans, if two there were, is referred to in several sources. Chronicles III, VI and VII record a sect founded by one Dusis in the fourth century (the century of the great revival under Baba Rabba), and according to Montgomery, Epiphanius² agrees with Chronicle VI's account of the doings of Dusis. From the sixth century comes the evidence of Photius³ that two Samaritan sects appeared before the Bishop of Alexandria, one called after 'a certain Dosthes or Dositheos'. The dispute involved the question whether 'the prophet who is to come' should be Dositheus or whether he should be Joshua. We have Islamic sources for the ninth to twelfth centuries, when apparently Dositheanism was still alive.

¹ 'The Importance of Samaritan Researches' in *The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society* 1, 1959, p. 50.

² *Haer.* i. 13.

³ *Bibliotheca* ccxxx (MPG 103.1084D).

Montgomery quotes the evidence of the tenth-century Mas'udi and the twelfth-century Shahrastani. These Muslim writers speak of two sects, the Dustan (or Dustaniya) and the Kushtan (or Kushtaniya), the later name derived from the Aramaic word *Kushia*, meaning truth, a favourite Gnostic term. In the course of Samaritan correspondence with the west in the nineteenth century it was stated that there were then no Dositheans left.

Professor Bowman in the last-quoted article has added considerably to the investigation of the problem of the Dositheans. He sees in them a sect that held sway in Samaria, or at least in the centre of worship at Nablus, until superseded by the priestly school or authority. If this is true, then we should differentiate in our studies herein between the early and late writings much more than we in fact do, but it is difficult to trace any major disagreements between the earlier and later periods other than the few pointed out in the chapters following. Those interested in the whole question of sectarian Samaritanism would do well to study Professor Bowman's views in the above-quoted article.¹ For our purposes, it is enough to note that there is no final decision about the problem of the Dositheans, but we may note the possibility of two so-called sects, or one sect replaced by another of similar type in later times, one denying the resurrection and therefore like the Sadducees at least on this topic, and the other accepting it. Professor Bowman thinks that the latter could have been 'proto-Pharisees' or Hasidim, which reminds us of Chronicle II's identifications mentioned earlier. Since the evidence for the resurrection quoted in this book comes mostly from mediaeval times, then we may well take it that the Dosithean heresy was responsible for the almost complete silence on the subject before the fourteenth century. If, as Professor Bowman thinks, Markah was a Dosithean, then we can understand his comparative silence on the subject of the resurrection. He must have belonged, we assume, to the earlier sect.²

Two more periods remain to be mentioned as important for the formulation or development of Samaritan doctrines. The first is the Byzantine period. Markah lived in the third or fourth century. Some of the chronicles date him in the time of the revivalist Baba Rabba, while others place him a little later. Of importance to us is

¹ See particularly pp. 46f.

² Since Markah does in fact refer to it (Memar IV. 12), he may have belonged to a time when theological changes were taking place in the sect.

the fact that Baba was responsible for the religious revival that produced the writings of the early part of the Defter (as far as we know) and Markah's Memar. These writings today represent the oldest and most important by far of all Samaritan literature. They were the formulation and systematization of Samaritan religious belief. We have no evidence whatsoever for the state of that belief before Baba Rabba, except what little is said in the Gospel of St John and the references to the Dositheans, with their belief or non-belief in the resurrection. What is certain is that the ideas and beliefs of Gnosticism, Christianity, Platonic, Neo-Platonic and Stoic philosophies had for the most part by Baba Rabba's time been either accepted or rejected. Samaritanism by now had taken a definite form, even if there was still controversy between the conservative priestly party and the Dositheans. Samaritan religion thereafter underwent little substantial modifications. Such changes as there were took place in much later times, and it is to these that we now look.

Our final period is the period of Islam, a time when the Samaritans lived under Islamic aegis and spoke Arabic (at least from about the eleventh century). No longer was Aramaic the first language. In the fourteenth century there was a great revival in Hebrew composition and all writings from this time are either in Hebrew (mainly for liturgical purposes) or in Arabic. In that century eastern and western Samaritanism met, when several small emigrations from Damascus to Nablus took place. As will be indicated later at various points, it is from the literature of that century that direct and obvious dependence on Christian traditions and teachings becomes visible, and it is more than likely that Christian concepts were for the first time accepted overtly into Samaritan belief, in each case the new tradition or teaching being traced by exegetical skill back to a Pentateuchal warrant, at least in germ.

The liturgies of the period are in Hebrew (with a tincture of the old Aramaic forms); the exegetical commentaries, law treatises and other writings are almost all in Arabic.

The literary compositions and their date are listed in the next section. In the Islamic period, we may note, there were several new developments. A sketch of these will be given here; the interested reader will find fuller treatment in an article by the present writer on Islamic influences on the mediaeval Samaritans.¹

¹ 'Islamic Doctrines in Samaritan Theology', *Muslim World* 50, 1960, pp. 279-90.

At the time the language of the Muslims was in everyday use; personal names of Samaritans change, certainly from the seventeenth century on, to Muslim-style names. Liturgical compositions begin to employ Islamic terminology, e.g. 'in the name of the merciful and compassionate God' at the heading of most compositions. The technical terminology for the doctrine of the oneness of God becomes more and more expressed in Islamic terms. More and more stress is laid on the Islamic doctrine called *naskh*, i.e. abrogation, wherein the limitless nature of God is emphasized. The Samaritans now speak increasingly of the total subjection of man to the will of God, the word for 'will' being the Arabic word used in Islamic literature.¹ 'Return to God', a favourite Islamic notion, is found frequently in the late mediaeval writings; again the same root is used as for the Arabic phrase.²

It is not unlikely that the controversies of the Islamic schools of theology and philosophy about the essence and substance of God influenced the Samaritans a great deal, just as the Christian debates of more than a millennium before had done, for in this period many compositions use a new terminology, that of Islam. The stress on God's limitless substance (Arabic *a'yān*) is greater than ever before, although this is not to overlook the vital fact that the fourth-century writers laid stress on it. It is an increase rather than a change of emphasis of a type often associated with the Silver Age of a philosophy, religion or literature.

The Islamic teaching about the Logos (cf. Surah 7.141 of the Koran) may have been responsible for the new Samaritan stress on Moses the Word. It may be that the influence was most potent in the teaching of Abu Muhammad 'Abdallah b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān (ninth century). Similarly al-Isfara'ini's (eleventh-century) doctrine of the eternal Word may have stimulated the Samaritans to greater emphasis on the pre-existent functions of Moses.

Equally important for this period is the increase in attributes of Moses, an increase almost certainly due to Islamic teachings about Muhammad. At this point it is well to exercise a note of caution, for many of these concepts in Islam, although they influenced the Samaritans of the period, did come originally from ancient Judaism and Christianity. They are not really new and the Samaritans do not mention them for the first time; it is a matter of fresh emphasis,

¹ Hebrew *raʿōn*, Arabic *riḍwān*.

² Hebrew root *šbh*, Arabic *thub* (Aramaic *tubh*).

and here we have the phenomenon of an ancient religion receiving influence from a much more recent one, whose source of inspiration only goes back to the period when the beliefs of the older religion were already formulated. In other words, Islam helped Samaritanism to recapture or re-emphasize some concepts that had lost their first prominence and still awaited fuller development.

The mediaeval formulation of the doctrine of creation is expressed partly in Islamic terms, although here again the Islamic terminology and concepts do not represent some entirely new theological situation but rather an ancient one that found prominence in Islam and not in early Samaritanism. Samaritanism 'catches up', as it were, on the doctrine, with the help of its younger sister.

The teaching about the unseen world may well have developed along new lines in the Middle Ages under Islamic stimulus, for there are elements in it that are typical of Islam, elements that found no stress in Christianity or Judaism or indeed early Samaritanism.

On the other hand, the Samaritans resisted some Islamic teachings with full effort. The doctrine of the after-life never incorporates the Islamic notions of a sensual paradise. Judaism developed something of this kind of outlook, though of a less gross nature than the Islamic; the Samaritans retained their earlier outlook on the subject, one nearer to the Christian view, a fact that may be explained as the result of the 'return' of Samaritans from Damascus to Nablus in the fourteenth century. On the subject of the last day or Day of Judgement, Samaritanism probably developed some concepts under the influence of Islam, unless both religions in the Middle Ages developed concepts already inchoate and ultimately derived from early Palestinian systems of thought.

The Samaritan Day of Atonement comes now to be thought of in much the same way as the Islamic Ramadan, the month of fasting. The word *ramadān* is, in fact, used sometimes in the liturgical poems for the Day of Atonement. In close association with the 'great fast', as both religions describe it, is the outlook on forgiveness. Both frequently speak of the gate of mercy being opened, and the imagery is more than just similar or coincidental; it is almost identical. There is also a number of attributive expressions for God that are identical in both faiths, though a few of these are derived from ancient Israelite religion, biblical or early post-biblical.¹

¹ For examples of both these parallels see the article by the present writer referred to above, 'Islamic Doctrines in Samaritan Theology', esp. pp. 288f.

Before we turn to the list of literary sources consulted for the formulation of Samaritan theology, it must be stressed that Samaritanism in its most formative period, i.e. up to the time of Baba Rabba, did not develop out of Pentateuchal religion in anything like the way that Judaism did. The latter had its larger sacred literature, with the Prophets and Writings in addition to the Pentateuch, and also the 'second law' or Mishnah that was the result of oral law building up, as new situations arose, over several centuries. The Samaritans had nothing but the Pentateuch. The development could not therefore be the same for both religions.

5 • THE SAMARITAN LITERATURE¹

This book has been written on the basis of the most representative, normative Samaritan literature, and no account is taken, except where stated, of unrepresentative material. One restriction has been the lack of publications which the reader might consult for himself, and preference has therefore been given to such literature as has been published in the original or in some European language. However, such a limitation would make impossible a true assessment of the theology of the Samaritans, and it has been necessary to consult literature available only in Hebrew or in Arabic manuscripts which still await publication. For convenience the literary sources have been set out below in tabulated form.

1. The PENTATEUCH, Torah or Law (all three names being applicable) is the Samaritan Bible. It consists of the first five books of the Old Testament, i.e. the so-called books of Moses (so the Samaritan description). The text of this Pentateuch version differs from that of the Judaists (which, of course, became part of the Christian Bible, and is that underlying our English versions) in hundreds of details, but the vast majority of these are of little account and throw no light on the theology of the Samaritans. There are, however a few differences of serious import which do demonstrate some aspect of Samaritan theological belief and these are noted in connection with the doctrines based on them. Amongst these are the variant texts dealing with Mount Gerizim as God's 'chosen place', the proper and divinely appointed centre of worship in the holy land, the variant text which provides the Samaritans with biblical warrant for their

¹ For details of publication of the works mentioned below, the bibliography should be consulted.

belief in the Day of Vengeance and Recompense, the additional Tenth Commandment (the ten of the Masoretic Text of the Judaists being held to be nine), and the variant that warrants belief in immortality in the Garden of Eden. These and other important variants in the Hebrew text are considered in their proper place. For more detailed study of the Samaritan Pentateuch the reader may turn to the useful studies of Montgomery¹ and Gaster,² and the studied comparisons of the two Hebrew texts, Samaritan and Judaist, by Ch. Heller.³

Ever since the careful analysis by Gesenius⁴ of the Samaritan text, who concluded that the Masoretic was primary and the Samaritan secondary, scholars have not taken the Samaritan version very seriously. However, at least two modern scholars of repute have recently suggested that the Samaritan Pentateuch may contain as old a version as the Judaist (Masoretic). One of these is R. Pfeiffer in his valuable *Introduction to the Old Testament*;⁵ the other, one of the greatest Hebraists of all time, Paul Kahle, followed by several of his distinguished pupils, who between them have raised up a new respect for the Samaritan text,⁶ and especially the Samaritan pronunciation of the ancient Hebrew language.⁷

2.) The TARGUM, the Aramaic version of the Pentateuch. Very little is known of the origin of this work, and it is thought that there is more than one version represented in the manuscripts of it available. The only texts printed are based on insufficient manuscript evidence and are orthographically unsound, but it is nevertheless valuable to have them in print at all.⁸

The published Samaritan chronicles ascribe the Targum to the period of Baba Rabba, but it seems unlikely that it would have taken the Samaritans so long to translate their Bible into the language of the people. In any case there was the example of the Judaists who already (before Baba) had their Aramaic renderings. Chronicle II

¹ *The Samaritans*, pp. 286f.

² Schweich Lectures, *passim*.

³ *The Samaritan Pentateuch: An adaptation of the Massoretic text*, 1923.

⁴ See Gaster, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 102, 133.

⁵ P. 103 especially, but see the whole section, pp. 101-4.

⁶ Kahle's view is found in many places, but the reader might consult his *The Abisha's Scroll of the Samaritans*, 1953.

⁷ See especially A. Murtonen, *An Etymological Vocabulary to the Samaritan Pentateuch* (Materials for a non-Masoretic Hebrew Grammar II). Helsinki, 1960.

⁸ Petermann and Vollers, *Pentateuchus Samaritanus* . . . , Berlin, 1872-91, and Walton's *Polyglott Bible* of 1657.

asserts that the Targum was rendered by Markah, and certainly the style and vocabulary suggest this.

The version which is the Markan one (if Chronicle II is correct in its attribution) is that which matches in language and style the great Memar (see below) of that writer; it is in the main a literal rendering of the Hebrew into Aramaic, of a type that is clearly Palestinian and similar to the Galilean Aramaic, but substantially different from the Babylonian Aramaic. The other textual tradition contains many varieties of exegesis, many additions, chiefly small, of a midrashic type, and can only be compared in style (though not in language) with the later Judaist Targums. It is, however, valuable for its illustrations of another exegetical tradition. Neither version has been properly studied or assessed, but a new, critical text is now awaited.¹

3. MEMAR MARKAH (the Teaching of Markah) is by far the most important Samaritan document after the Pentateuch. It is written in the same Aramaic dialect as the literal Targum, although there are a few Hebrew passages. It can be dated almost certainly to the late third or early fourth century AD for a number of reasons. The chronicles speak of Markah as belonging to the time of Baba Rabba and so to this period. The Memar contains many concepts current only in that time; it shows the first clear traces of the influence of the New Testament. It uses a number of Greek, but no Latin words, a fact that shows it to have been written at a time long enough after the end of Hellenistic influence in Palestine for Greek to have fallen out of use as the *lingua franca* of the Near East. Almost all of the Greek words used by Markah ceased to be used in literature after his time.

The Teaching of Markah comprises six books or chapters, the first two of which are concerned with the deliverance of Israel by Moses and the exodus from Egypt that ensued. Book I is written as a story, containing a few traditions not found in the Old Testament or in other Judaist sources, a story that reflects the northern tradition (the E source) of the Pentateuch. Book II is an exegesis of the purely biblical account (Ex. 3-14), and more especially of the Song of Moses (Ex. 15). Books III and IV deal with the status of Israel in the promised land and contain the Samaritan ethics of Markah's day, based on the ethic of the Pentateuch. Book V contains the story of the death, ascension and assumption of Moses, a narrative that is unique in many ways and only in small details can it be compared

¹ See p. 13, n. 2 above.

with Judaist and Christian legends of the same type. Book VI covers a miscellany of topics, particularly on creation and the copying of the Law by Moses.

A full text with English translation by the present writer was published in September 1963. Markah's work is tremendously important for an understanding of the theology of the Samaritans. Markah shared, as we have noted, in Baba Rabba's renewal or renaissance of worship and literature. This was probably a lay, rather than a priestly, movement, and this is reflected in the fact that Markah expresses purely philosophical and metaphysical concepts as well as the traditional religious ones. Thus his work manifests many ideas current during the Hellenistic and Roman eras in Palestine, providing the student of the period with a new source for the examination of the evolution of religious and philosophical concepts between the Old and New Testaments.

4. The DEFTER (Greek *diphthera*, book) is sometimes called the Samaritan 'Book of Common Prayer' and the title is fairly apt. It is the foundation of the whole Liturgy, and during every festival prayers and collects from it are used as an integral part of the festival worship. The earliest portion of the Defter belongs probably to the third or fourth century, the time of Baba Rabba. Markah and Amram Darah are the most important contributors. There is a block of prayers entitled the DURRAN (meaning 'string of pearls') usually ascribed to Amram Darah. Markah's prayers are the most revered and they resemble the thought and style of his Memar closely. Amram Darah's are almost equally venerated by the later Samaritans, and the language is the same as Markah's, though the style is different. Most of these prayers have been published in a European language.¹

There are certain other ancient prayers as well as Markah's and Amram's in the oldest stratum of the Defter. The most well known are Joshua's Prayer and the Prayer of the Angels. Additions were made to the Defter from the ninth century onwards, but when reference is made to the Defter in this work it is the early portion that is meant, except where otherwise stated.²

¹ For Markah, P. Kahle, 'Die zwölf Marka-Hymnen aus dem "Defter" der samaritanischen Liturgie' in *Opera Minora*, 1956 (originally published in 1932 in *Baumstark-Festschrift [Oriens Christianus III, 7]*), pp. 77-106. For Amram, J. Macdonald, 'The Theological Hymns of Amram Darah', in *ALOUS* 2, 1961, pp. 54-73.

² For the printed text of the whole collection (which is chiefly in Aramaic) Sir A. E. Cowley's edition of the Liturgy, Volume I, pp. 1-92, should be consulted.

5. The **ASATIR** is a chronicle (**CHRONICLE I**) from the creation of Adam to the death of Moses, and is very important for Samaritan studies in that it contains much material of a pseudo-historical sort not found elsewhere. The date of the work is not known and it is impossible even to date it to within a century or two of its composition. Moses Gaster, who published the text with a translation, suggested the third century BC, while his son Theodor suggested in conversation with the present writer a date about the ninth century AD! It is fairly certain that it was composed somewhere between these two centuries. The arguments of language and content suggest a Byzantine date, but this is far from certain. The death of Moses is told in closely similar terms in Markah's *Memar* and in the *Asatir*, but neither mentions the other and we have no way of determining as yet which borrowed from which. One argument in favour of a date later than Markah for the *Asatir* is that many writers quote the latter and few the former, suggesting that the all-important *Memar* was already in mediaeval times considered to be of hoary antiquity (as the present-day Samaritans say), while the *Asatir* was not.

M. Gaster published the text and translation also of a Commentary (called the *Pitron*) on the *Asatir*, which is useful for the purposes of this book, even although it is of late mediaeval origin. For convenience we may place the *Asatir* between Markah's *Memar* and the next composition.

6. **CHRONICLE II.** The dates of the seven chronicles, which are proved by manuscript evidence to have each had an independent existence, are mostly difficult to ascertain, but some of them can be dated to within a century of composition. The second cannot be dated at all, but it is the best and most accurate of all the chronicles. It begins at the time when Joshua arrived in Canaan and takes us right through to mediaeval times. It is particularly valuable for the Roman period and for its knowledge of Christian literature. Even more so, it merits a unique status for its handling of historical material found in the Old Testament Books of Kings and Chronicles. The earliest part of this work in biblical Hebrew may well antedate the early mediaeval period. It is to be published by the present writer within the next two years. For the Samaritan view of their own history in section 2 of this Introduction *Chronicle II* has been chiefly consulted.

7. The **DUSTAN** is a part of the Liturgy.¹ It has been suggested

¹ C. pp. 69, 70, 209, 869.

often that it is the work of an heretical sect of that name (so Chronicle VI), but it may be ascribed to one called Dositheus, possibly a contemporary of the Judaist Philo.¹

8. *AL-KAFI*, written probably in the eleventh century, by Yusuf (Joseph) b. Salama, often called al-Askari, is a work giving an exposition of biblical laws. It is important as a representative of Samaritan religious practices between the fourth and fourteenth centuries.

9. Abul Hasan of Tyre wrote several works in the eleventh century which have value for the study of Samaritan theology. His main works were *AT-TABBAKH*, partly legalistic, partly expository and partly theological, *AL-MA'MAD* dealing with the future life, *AT-TAUBA*, a treatise on repentance, and several important compositions in the Liturgy.²

10. *AB GELUGAH* (the second name means the same as Muhammad, i.e. praised or praiseworthy) also belongs to the eleventh century. He lived at Acco and wrote for the Liturgy.³

11. *CHRONICLE III*, usually known as the *Tolidah*, sometimes *Tolidot* (generations), and also as *Chronicle Neubauer* after the scholar who published the text,⁴ probably belongs in its earliest portions to the twelfth century. The first part is ascribed usually to Eleazar b. Amram. It covers the period from Adam up to AD 1149. Thereafter it was brought 'up to date' by Jacob b. Ishmael (to 1346) and by later writers (to 1856). It is not a true chronicle, since it mainly deals with the High Priests and Samaritan families, but the little history it contains is valuable, in so far as we have all too little historical material from the Samaritans themselves.

12. Further understanding of the beliefs and practices peculiar to the Samaritans is gained from a work called *AL-KHILAF* (on the differences between the Judaists and Samaritans); it is by Munajja b. Sadaka (*Sadaqa*) of the twelfth century.

13. *GHAZAL AD-DUWAIK* is one of the most important of all theological writers after Markah. He belonged to the twelfth century and his chief work consists of biblical commentaries, the chief of them being on the Second Kingdom and therefore largely eschatological. Some scholars ascribe to him also the important poem

¹ See further C. p. xxii.

² C. pp. 70, 875. He is often called Ab H̱isdah.

³ C. pp. 75, 77.

⁴ A. Neubauer, *Chronique samaritaine*, 1869, reprinted in 1873 as extract no. 14 of *Journal asiatique*.

MOLED MOSHEH (birth of Moses), which is used at various festive occasions of the Samaritans even to this day. It, too, is largely eschatological, but it contains most of the mediæval legends of Moses' birth.¹

14. The thirteenth century brings three contributors to the Liturgy, whose compositions have provided material for this book. One is the High Priest AMRAM (1255-1269) whose hymns found a place in the later and enlarged Defter.² SA'DALLAH AL-KITHARI's most important contributions to the Liturgy are in the Marriage Service, but they have proved useful as illustrative of some aspects of the theology.³ AARON B. MANIR (hereinafter BEN MANIR) may be dated to the thirteenth century, possibly the early fourteenth. His voluminous compositions seem to reflect the ideas of eastern Samaritanism. He preferred often to express his thoughts in mystical vein, a practice which results in serious difficulties for the translator of his Hebrew verses.⁴

15. The fourteenth century provides the greatest volume of literature. First in our list comes CHRONICLE IV, known as the Samaritan Book of Joshua (in Arabic).⁵ It is possible that its earliest portion is much earlier, but we cannot ascertain this as yet. The starting-point is the last days of Moses and it runs through to the fourth century and the time of Baba Rabba. It is far from reliable from an historical point of view, but it is nevertheless revealing for the Samaritan conception of events in the unknown compiler's day.

16. CHRONICLE V, known often as the SHALSHALAT (or SALSALAT) or 'Chain' (of High Priests), is ascribed to the High Priest Eleazar b. Phinehas, who is not to be confused with the compiler of CHRONICLE III, of the fourteenth century. It has been published by M. Gaster.⁶ The period covered is from Adam up to the time of the High Priest Jacob b. Aaron (thirteenth century).

17. CHRONICLE VI by Abul Fath is one of the best of Samaritan

¹ This work is not to be confused with poems of the same title by Phinehas b. Isaac (who died in 1898) or the sixteenth-century Isma'il ar-Rumaihi.

² C. pp. 30, 31.

³ C. pp. 227, 228, 256, 380, 383, 446, 448, 533, 648, 688, 726, 729, 767, 780, 781, 809, 818-20, 823-5, 827, 831, 834, 837.

⁴ C. pp. 95, 97, 98, 179(?), 180, 181, 185, 321, 323, 327, 385, 644, 676, 678, 679.

⁵ Text published by T. G. J. Juynboll, *Chronicon Samaritanum*, Leiden, 1848; also by M. Gaster, 'Das Buch Josua in hebräisch-samaritanischer Rezension', *ZDMG* 62, 1906, pp. 209-79 and 494-549.

⁶ In his collected works, *Texts and Studies*, London, 1925-8; the text is in Vol. III, the English translation in Vol. I, pp. 493f.

historical works. There is critical use by the compiler of CHRONICLES II, III and IV. It covers the period from Adam to AD 756, but the work was brought up to 1853 by various later compilers. The work is an important witness to Samaritan claims to be the true Israel and is second only to CHRONICLE II in value. It has been published by Vilmar.¹

18. The fourteenth century is best represented by an abundance of liturgical compositions, which have proved of importance for the study of the theology in mediaeval times. The chief writers are PHINEHAS B. JOSEPH,² who was responsible apparently for the great stimulus that led to the revival of Hebrew writing in that period. The bulk of the Liturgy comes from the fourteenth century and represents the viewpoints of both western (Nablus) and eastern (Damascus) Samaritanism. ELEAZAR B. PHINEHAS,³ the High Priest after Phinehas b. Joseph, was his son; another son ABISHA B. PHINEHAS,⁴ who died in 1376, contributed important pieces like his brother and father. ABDALLAH B. SOLOMON (SULAIMAN)⁵ is one of the two or three great fourteenth-century writers, whose compositions are found in almost every festival liturgy. We have occasion to quote him frequently. MATTANAH (or HIBATALLAH, to give him his Arabic name) the Egyptian⁶ and PHINEHAS B. ITHAMAR⁷ were two other important liturgical writers of the period⁸.

19. ABRAHAM B. JACOB left a valuable commentary on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, which is priceless as a source for the study of Samaritan exegesis. He lived in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

20. The HILLUKH (way of life) is a collection of laws, with exposition and interpretation, from about this period, but there is considerable doubt about the identity and date of the author. It is very useful for eschatological studies, but it is hoped that when it is published a considerable step forward will have been taken in the understanding

¹ *Abulfathi annales Samaritani*, Gotha, 1865.

² For the list of his writings see C. p. xcvi.

³ C. pp. 35-37, 180, 187, 292, 304, 318, 329, 435, 470, 489, 667, 801, 846.

⁴ C. pp. 106, 108, 240, 248, 249, 269, 366, 368, 375, 410, 430, 478, 479, 481, 484, 488, 494, 504, 511, 696, 699, 736, 739.

⁵ The voluminous list for this writer may be taken from C. p. xcvi.

⁶ C. pp. 111, 180, 265, 357, 400, 425.

⁷ C. pp. 368, 481, 676.

⁸ Such details as are known about these and the fifteenth- to nineteenth-century liturgists mentioned below are found in Cowley's Introduction (*op. cit.*, pp. xxxi f.).

of Samaritan law and its development. M. Gaster has published extracts in his *Oral Law*.

21. PHINEHAS, the High Priest of the sixteenth century (1508–1548 approximately), is another contributor to the Liturgy whose compositions have been of value for this work.¹

22. ISMA'IL AR-RUMAIHI of the same period has been of service, too, because of his valuable contributions to the Liturgy and particularly his poem *Maulid an-Nashi*.²

23. MESHALMAH's Commentary on Genesis, probably composed in the seventeenth century, marks a valuable stage in Samaritan exegesis. It provides many useful and illustrative statements on theological matters. This is a work that will prove invaluable to students of biblical exegesis (especially the history of it) in the future.

24. The eighteenth century brought a minor revival in Samaritan scholarship and liturgical writing. ABRAHAM B. ISAAC added some new work to the Liturgy, as a result of which some old pieces were dropped.³ The same holds true of his contemporary GHAZAL (or TABHYA) B. ISAAC.⁴ GHAZAL B. ABI' S-SARUR has left from this century an interesting Commentary on Genesis and Exodus, for the latter of which he used Markah's Memar and for the former the Asatir (CHRONICLE I).

25. The MALEF (or MALIF or MALAF), a Samaritan catechism for teaching children the laws and religious beliefs, seems to have been composed about this time. It is arranged in the form of question and answer; it is divided into two main sections, belief and law. The text has not been published, but E. Baguley has produced a doctoral dissertation, containing a critical introduction, text and English translation.⁵

26. PHINEHAS B. ISAAC, who died in 1898, is the last of the liturgists whose compositions have been consulted for the purposes of ascertaining the theology. He wrote some good pieces which have been incorporated into the modern manuscripts of the Liturgy.⁶

27. The same writer composed YOM AD-DIN or Book of the Day of

¹ C. pp. 235, 422.

² Published by S. J. Miller, *The Samaritan Molad Mosheh*, New York, 1949.

³ C. p. 403.

⁴ C. pp. 103, 132, 136, 143, 145–9, 154, 167–9, 198, 280, 463, 661, 693, 712, 770, 814, 815.

⁵ University of Leeds, 1962.

⁶ C. pp. 109, 120, 150, 206, 207, 210, 218, 222 and perhaps 345.

Judgement, in Arabic. This was written a few years before his death and is almost entirely eschatological. M. Gaster has presented extracts of it in translation in his *Oral Law*.

28. CHRONICLE VII, usually known in older books as Chronicle Adler,¹ covers the period from Adam up to 1899, the year before the actual composition. It borrows extensively from CHRONICLE VI, but is useful for the latest period and well typifies the attitude of the modern Samaritans toward history.

These are the chief sources upon which the findings of this book are based, besides those which are to be found only in rare manuscripts. As has been stated in the Preface, every attempt has been made to quote from published sources. As a result, a majority of the citations are from the Liturgy and Markah's Memar, as well as from extracts from other works published by M. Gaster.

6 · THE SAMARITAN CREED

Unlike Christianity and Islam and like Judaism, Samaritanism has never developed a creed the words of which are fixed beyond alteration. There are many forms, some with descriptive and ascriptive variants on the simplest form. A study of the creed is placed here by way of introduction to the many doctrines that are examined below. The modern Samaritans state their belief thus:

We believe only in God and in Moses, the son of Amram, his servant, and in his sacred law, and in the Mount Gerizim and in the day of punishment and reward.

This version, translated thus by M. Gaster² from the letter of the eighteenth-century Meshalmah b. Ab Sakhwah, is included in a long statement by him on the characteristic features of Samaritanism. This letter comes from a period in Samaritan studies when correspondence between western scholars and the Samaritans of Nablus was more or less the only means of providing information. Few codices had become available and most of what was in the hands of Europeans consisted of a few late copies of the Pentateuch and Targum. Now that many other sources are available for study, we may begin to estimate the probable development of the creed from its earliest form.

¹ After the scholar who published it, E. N. Adler (and M. Seligsohn), *Une nouvelle chronique samaritaine* (separate publication as an extract, Paris, 1903).

² In his Schweich Lectures, *The Samaritans*, p. 180.

J. E. H. Thomson, whose book on the Samaritans was written at a time when many important Samaritan writings had not yet become accessible, wrote as follows:¹

Although the Samaritans resisted so strenuously all the violent efforts put forth by pagan and Christian emperors to convert them, they did not escape wholly the influence of those among whom they lived. In the epistle which they sent to their brethren in England,² the Samaritans thus declare their creed:

'My faith is in Thee, Oh JHWH, and in Moses the son of Amram Thy servant, in the Holy Law, and in Mount Gerizim, the Bethel, and in the day of Vengeance and Recompense.' Dr Mills thus summarizes the articles of the Samaritan creed: 'One only God JHWH, one only Lawgiver, Moshe (Moses), one only Divine book, the Torah (Law), one only Holy Place, Mount Gerizim, the true Beth El.' These are primitive; the doctrines of Angels, of Immortality, and of the Last Judgment are, in the opinion of Dr Mills, later additions.³

Thomson thus points out the environment in which the Samaritans found themselves and to which they offered strong resistance.

The primitive elements in the creed, according to Mills and Thomson, are thus four: belief in God, in Moses, in the Law, and in the Holy Mount.⁴

Were these the primitive beliefs of the Samaritans, or was there a form of creed containing less at an earlier time? Or was the earliest creed possessed of five tenets as that asserted by Meshalmah? To answer these questions is difficult, but we find that Markah in his *Memar* gives shorter forms. E.g. in Book IV, section 5, of that work we find:

It behoves us to believe in God and in Moses his prophet.

This short creed would match the later Islamic and indeed may have given rise to the form the Islamic creed took, but there is no evidence for this. It has for a very long time been customary to ascribe much of Islam's expression to Judaism, and only time will tell whether the rediscovery of the Samaritans and their literature,

¹ *The Samaritans: their Testimony to the Religion of Israel*, 1919, pp. 174f.

² Because of interest in them from England the Samaritans at the time mistakenly assumed there were Samaritans in that country.

³ The work by Mills is called *Three Months' Residence at Nablus, and an Account of the Modern Samaritans*, 1864.

⁴ An example of such a four-tenet creed occurs in the Keble College manuscript no. 4 (Samaritan collection), fol. 165. Cf. other examples in C. p. 40.14f. from the Durran, and p. 84.4f. from Markah.

which was once the literature of a very large community, will help to throw light on the background of Islam.

A variation of the simple credal form occurs in Memar Markah IV.7, where we read:

Let us believe in the Lord and in Moses his servant.

As will appear in the chapter on Moses' attributes, Moses is called by many titles in the earliest literature, but we may feel justified in assuming that the earliest form was the biblical one.¹ Thus 'Moses his servant' and 'Moses his prophet', which are both biblical expressions,² could have been primitive forms.

It cannot, however, be claimed that Markah taught a creed of two tenets, because he elsewhere presents longer forms. For example, in the Memar IV.9 he uses a three-part form:

We believe in thee and in Moses thy Man and in thy scripture.

There is no particular reason why Markah should have limited himself in the above-quoted cases to two- or three-tenet creeds as far as the context involved is concerned. It may be that no final form of the creed had yet evolved in his day. There is no evidence as to when exactly any one Samaritan doctrine reached its final form, and we are forced to processes of deduction more often than not in order to determine the probable history of doctrines or creed.

Another variant form of the two-tenet creed is found in the Memar IV.9:

Let us return to the True One and believe in the Lord our maker and master, and also in Moses our prophet and saviour.

Here the credal statement occurs in a context of exhortation to dependence on God, and it may be that this example does no more than provide another illustration of a possible process of development from a two-tenet creed of simplest proportions.

In one of the prayers of Markah in the Defter (C. p. 84) we have a four-tenet form of the creed, which suggests that the belief in the Day of Vengeance and Recompense had not yet become an integral part of the Samaritan system of belief.

We believe in Thee, O Lord, and in Moses the son of Amram thy servant, and in the holy Law, and in Mount Gerizim, the chosen and sacred, the choicest (mountain) in all the earth. There is only one God.

¹ Ex. 14.31, which in itself could have provided the first creed.

² For the latter cf. Deut. 34.10.

It is to be noted that the first three tenets are stated in their simplest form and that the fourth receives an expanded form. It is clear from other studies of Samaritan developments that such expansions usually preceded the formal acceptance, so that the fourth tenet, although no doubt always held in principle as a belief, came to be a dogmatic statement in time. Perhaps we should look to a time when the Samaritans were placed in a defensive position with regard to their claims for Mount Gerizim. If so, then the Judaist rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple would seem the most likely occasion. On the other hand, the destruction of the Samaritan temple by John Hyrcanus could well have forced them to 'save the situation' to some extent by declaring once and for all in credal form their everlasting belief in the sacred mountain.

The statement 'There is only one God' occurs less often by far in the Memar than in the Deftar, a fact which may suggest to us early stages in credal formulation, for the Samaritans never made the statement on the oneness of God part of the creed. That it is nevertheless absolutely fundamental to them, as to the Judaist, is in no doubt, but at some stage the Samaritans were obliged to state their beliefs in a way that differentiated them from their southern rivals. This process may have resulted from the fact that in the early centuries of Roman rule in Palestine the Romans did not distinguish between the two communities. There must have been occasions when Judaists and Samaritans were classed together for punishment by the overlord, when the Samaritans would dearly have liked to show that they were not Judaists. Such a need, arising from purely practical and political circumstances, would give rise to a strenuous Samaritan effort to state their position in terms different from those of the Judaists.

Thomson makes the following comment on the independence of what he calls 'Markah's creed' (assuming that the two-tenet creed was the only form Markah knew; we have shown differently):

As the unique position occupied by the Law emphasized the dignity of Moses, through whom it had come to Israel, it laid the Samaritans more open to Moslem and Christian influences. Yet these may easily be exaggerated. Markah's creed seems almost an echo of that of Mohammed: 'There is only one God, and there is no prophet but Moses the son of Amram.' It is really independent; it contains a double protest, on the one hand against the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and on the other against the many claimants to the prophetic office.

. . .¹

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 192.

That the Samaritans reacted to Christian missionary successes is hardly a matter for dispute, but one thesis of this book is the demonstration from quoted sources of the Samaritan absorption of Christian concepts. The Samaritans were far more on the defence against Judaist influences, and indeed the present writer cannot detect in all his reading one definite example of Samaritan borrowing directly from Judaism, whereas he finds literally scores of illustrations of borrowing from Christianity. The statement by Thomson that the Samaritans laid themselves open to increasing Muslim and Christian influences because of the high status of Moses accorded him in the Law rather suggests that the second tenet of the creed was late. In actual fact, at least three centuries before the advent of Islam in Palestine the Samaritans included belief in Moses in *every* form of their inchoate creed! How could it be otherwise in view of Ex. 14.31? The influence of Christianity was undoubtedly a matter of fact, for even Markah reflects the influence of the New Testament in his *Memar*, as has been pointed out in the recent edition of that work.

Another factor, unquestionably of great importance, was the findings of the Christian Council of Nicaea in 325 (at which the Bishop of Sebaste was present). Amongst these was the pre-eminent credal formula of belief in one Lord Jesus Christ. The soteriological function of Christ may have drawn Samaritan attention more closely to the role of their own saviour Moses. From the fourth century onwards, belief in Moses was always the second tenet of the creed.

As Montgomery pointed out,¹ there is close resemblance between the Samaritan and Islamic creeds, for the Islamic six articles of faith include belief in God, in angels, in the scriptures, in the prophets, in the resurrection and Day of Judgement, and in God's absolute decree. There is no belief in a holy mountain here; indeed, it is such a belief, the fourth of the Samaritan formula, that differentiates it most from the creeds of the other Near Eastern religions. Judaism has the first three of the Samaritan beliefs, but the Samaritan belief in Mount Gerizim made it impossible for the Samaritans and Judaists to come close to each other.

Did the Samaritans find themselves forced to modify or expand their simple creed? This is not easy to answer. It seems more likely that in the earliest times of the Samaritan community, i.e. from the

¹ *The Samaritans*, p. 207.

entry into Canaan, they believed in the sanctity of Mount Gerizim.¹ On the other hand, it could be forcibly argued that it was the eventual success of the southern kingdom of Judah that drove them to their allegiance to Mount Gerizim. We can well understand belief in God, in his prophet and law, being fundamental from earliest times, but belief in the sacred mountain? This could be interpreted as a doctrine arising from polemical motives. However, there is no evidence as to the veracity of the Samaritan variant from the Masoretic (Judaist) text on this point.²

The evidence for the early period of Samaritan religion is debatable as we have seen, but by the fourteenth century the five-tenet creed is firmly established. We read from Abdallah (C. p. 491.12):

My faith is in thee, O Lord, and in Moses and in the Law and in Mount Gerizim near the Oak of Moreh, and in the Day of Recompense when the spirit flees this body, from this world to the next.

Again there is expansion of the (possibly) latest elements of the creed. It is as if the belief in the Day of Vengeance and Recompense was still at the stage of having to be stressed and therefore defended. Yet Markah clearly regarded the Day of Vengeance (occasionally of Vengeance and Recompense) as an integral and fundamental part of the structure of his teaching. He does not state it as a credal matter, but already in his time the whole purpose and burden of social responsibilities is linked with the final outcome, the Day of Vengeance.

Perhaps we shall have to be content with the tentative conclusion that Markah taught what his people believed at a time when such ideas as the Last Day, the Day of Judgement, the Day of Reckoning, were current in his part of the world. Out of the flux of apocalyptic notions the Samaritans received and accepted those which explained and validated their own faith, but it was not till later times, when several religions from the one matrix had achieved maturity, that it became necessary to state the 'orthodox' Samaritan position. The use of the word 'orthodox' leads us to one further possibility. Were there sectarian differences among the Samaritans themselves that gave rise to variant statements of the creed? We have noted the evidence for the existence of the Dosithean sect and indicated that there can be as yet no final statement on its beliefs. It is, however, more than possible that the Samaritans, faced first with their old

¹ See the arguments of Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 101-4.

² Deut. 27.4.

antagonists the Judaists, then by Christian missions, and finally by militant Islam, had a great deal of internal controversy to overcome.¹ Whatever be the truth of this and whatever may have been the processes of development from a simple two-tenet creed after Ex. 14.31, we can state with Abraham b. Jacob of the eighteenth century the modern position:

There is only one God, and Ben Amram and his exalted holy book, and the goodly mount on which was the uplifted voice,² and the Day of Vengeance and Recompense (C. p. 664.32-33).

Even as late as the eighteenth century, when belief in the Day of Vengeance and Recompense had clearly become accepted as axiomatic and credal, there is always an atmosphere of defence on the part of the Samaritans about their sacred mountain. It seems likely that this one tenet had to be stressed century after century in a special way because of the high status Jerusalem was accorded by the time of Islam's early advances. Jerusalem had always been the holy city of the Judaists; it became the holy city of the Christians. Islam made it its second holy city after Mecca. The Samaritans were always on their own as far as their 'Mecca' was concerned. They developed their *qibla*, i.e. the direction towards which prayers must be said. Perhaps that was one way they found of reacting to the claims of Islam's Mecca and the holy city of Judaism and Christianity. In any case, it was the fourth tenet that marked the Samaritans as different from the Judaists. Holding on to and stressing that tenet was holding on to life.

The defensive note of the Samaritans seems best expressed in the Defter statement:

My Lord, we shall never worship any but thee, nor have we any faith but in thee and in Moses thy prophet, and in thy true scriptures and in the place of worshipping thee, Mount Gerizim, Bethel, the mount of rest and of the divine presence, and in the Day of Vengeance and Recompense.

¹ The Dosithean sect may have been responsible for the late formal acceptance of the fifth tenet.

² Referring to Mount Sinai, the theophany on which is transferred in many writings to Mount Gerizim.

PART ONE

GOD AND THE WORLD

III

BELIEF IN GOD (A)

I · KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

*What has God told you that reveals knowledge of him?
We know him from the wise arrangement of his works.¹*

THAT THE SAMARITANS were able successfully to develop ideas taken from current systems of thought into doctrines within the faith is patent, as we see when examining such doctrines as those of the pure light, merit, Moses the saviour. That they did not probably try to develop their teaching about God along the same lines seems equally patent from an examination of what they have to say about God. Their teaching here is not precisely that of the Pentateuch, but it is substantially so. It seems likely that they felt decidedly diffident about the subject and hesitated to build up any philosophical scheme of belief about God that was not substantially based on the sacred Law. Where there was development, it is expressed almost entirely in Markah's great Memar. In that work there is a notable philosophical and metaphysical flavour, and so the conservative religious expression of God's attributes tends to be submerged in the broader, more comprehensive language of philosophy. Even the liturgist has not been prone to exercise poetic licence on this subject.

It might be thought that the Samaritan doctrine of God will inevitably prove dull and lifeless, as compared with those doctrines which allowed the Samaritans widening scope, but yet the doctrine of God is so precisely expressed, well formulated and regular that one cannot but admire the careful, scrupulous effort that has been made through the centuries to avoid the pitfalls (from the Samaritan point of view) that other religions fell into.

Before studying what the Samaritans believe about the nature and person of God we must examine their cosmological argument. It is

¹ Malef 3.

often claimed that Samaritan writers always presupposed the existence of God and cared nothing for the proof or evidence of it. This is only partially true, for many writers do in fact make a real effort to stress the argument for God's existence along the traditional cosmological line. There is no real place for the ontological argument in Samaritan thinking. The cosmological argument, in two divisions with their conclusion, is the major theistic argument employed. Anything else fell outside the Samaritan ideological scheme.

The cosmological argument is that which infers the prime cause from its effect or effects. Thus creatures demonstrate the existence of a creator. Throughout the seventeen centuries of Samaritan literature available to us¹—and the earliest undoubtedly reflects much older concepts—this argument assumed a recognized and unalterable form. The simplest exhortation to employ the cosmological argument is that of the Dustan (eleventh century):

Let him who would have knowledge of God reflect on his creations (C. p. 69.12).

It is at once evident that even as late as the eleventh century the Samaritans were not averse to urging the investigator to examine the cosmological signs for God. It is Markah, however, seven or eight centuries earlier, who formulated the first clear statements in this field. According to him (Memar VI.1), God created ten things that testify to his might (the prime witness of his existence); these are: (1 and 2) the periods of light and darkness, (3-6) the four seasons, (7-10) the four elements that were the predeveloped stuff of creation. These ten, when studied in conjunction with the *modus operandi* of creation, take on a different contour, for they refer basically to that process within the creative act as a whole which involved the formulating and categorizing of the raw material of creation.

By 'his creations' is everywhere meant all that can be perceived by men, whether by the naked eye or by scientific instrument, however primitive, or by intuition. In the simplest form of the argument the very *fact* of heaven and earth, stars, sun and moon, the very *fact* of rivers and trees, mountains and valleys, demonstrates an order of being. There is no chaos in the scene, celestial or terrestrial. Everything points to there being a preconceived plan. A different sort of creation might have, at least hypothetically, manifested a greater multitude of wholly different creations and creatures, all or most

¹ Excluding the Pentateuch.

different in order and type from each other. As it is, however, the creation perceived by man is one of order, not of chaos. There is no evidence of caprice or chance, of un wisdom or accident. All points to cause and effect. The effects, which are so similar as to demonstrate a primal cause for all which is itself one in essence, prove the existence of the cause.

The one weakness in the cosmological argument, as employed by most religions, is that serious account is taken only of the fact that effects prove a cause, but not that they do not prove that the cause is other than past. The argument does not really prove that the prime cause is *still* existing or *still* active. It is possibly for this reason that Samaritanism, like some other religions, laid much stress on the continuing maintenance of the created order, although it does not specify whether the maintenance is governed by an active person or by innate principle. Most religious systems are content to presuppose this and leave it to philosophy to discover the further outcome of the simpler argument.

The second division in the argument as found in Samaritan thinking is the discovery of God in the world by means other than the physical. According to this, man can discover that God exists through his own contemplative powers. At the first level this means only a slight extension of the first division of the argument.

From the works that thou hast made *those who have knowledge* know that thou art the God of them (C. p. 492.3-4).

The class of men referred to is next in mental evolution above those who have to rely solely on their physical, perceptive senses. This class perceive God in an alogical way; brain observation is superseded in them by mind perception. But there are other, higher degrees of perception, which include the active employment of innate wisdom. These are receptive to the revelation of God, usually after long study and contemplation upon the revealed book of scripture. According to Markah, this study and contemplation leads to a quickening of the perceptive powers of a man, so that wisdom in him assumes a highly evolved form, at a stage nearer the pure wisdom manifested in the very order and plan of the creative process itself.

There are thus two means of discovering God in manifested nature, the one normal, the other supernormal (but not supernatural). The second division, the supernormal, is obviously closely associated with inspiration, a subject we shall take up later, and no doubt inspiration is but the extension of the physical perception.

All wise men in their wisdom, all men of understanding, dost thou not teach their wisdom and understanding as to how thou hast created the heavens and their heavens without the use of hand? Or how thou didst create all their host with a mere word, or how thou upholdest them all without labour, or by what means thou upliftest the earth in the midst of them? (C. pp. 491.32-492.2).

Amram Darah in this passage reflects the advanced cosmology of the Samaritans in the Roman period, for they had not restricted themselves to the Pentateuchal cosmology, but had accepted the findings of Greek science up to a point. They knew, for example, that the world was not at the bottom of creation, but in fact was encircled by it.

The class of men referred to by Amram Darah are superior to those who merely deduce certain truths from creation's manifestation, physical or otherwise, for they not only possess knowledge and use wisdom in their perception; they also contemplate the underlying process *vis-à-vis* human technology. Such men know that, as Abdullah says,

He who is hidden from the gaze of the eyes but is revealed to the meditations of the mind is to be found in all things, and yet he who looks will not see him (C. p. 213.21).

The fruit of contemplation hangs in the garden of mysticism and the Samaritan thinker possessed of spiritual 'know-how' firmly and sensibly plucks it, for he goes on with his argument to demonstrate the next stage in the search for the First Cause, namely his basic characteristic. It is on this point that the difference between the man who perceives merely by physical means and the man whose perception is *via* his innate wisdom becomes apparent. The former cannot say much about the Creator, except that his creations show something of the wisdom and power that Cause must possess. It is the man who perceives with wisdom who can describe the oneness and essence of the First Cause.

The concepts of God that are most obvious are those of magnificence, grandeur and power. Less obvious to the ordinary man is the nature of the wisdom underlying creation. Before we examine the individual attributes of God in their own light, let us note some of the findings in general terms of the percipient who stands and contemplates creation.

Thy works demonstrate to us thy goodness. Thou possessest them and directest them and settest them in ordered position according to thy will (C. p. 9.30f.).

The nature of this perception may be judged in physical terms, for the unfailing seasons and the regularity with which vegetation yields its fruit, to mention but two phenomena of nature, give assurance that God's creation, at the strictly physical level, is a thing of plan and order. The student of religious precept may discover that

Through thy works thou hast revealed unto us thy greatness and constant goodness. Thy Scripture reveals thy truth and illumination (C. p. 12.8).

The regularity of day and night, light and darkness, upon which many Samaritans pondered much, demonstrates the primary place of light in the scheme of things, but there is nothing in the poem from which the last extract is taken of the higher light that transcends, but is coessential with, the physical light that was created before the physical universe.

Even more religious in its expression and in its findings is a typical statement by Amram Darah that

The Lord is glorious and his works awe-inspiring. They tell us in mysteries and revelations that the Lord is greater than all the gods.

Aside from his dependence on the biblical teaching, Amram Darah here seems to reflect the two ways of perceiving, for 'mysteries and revelations' is a standardized Samaritan phrase for expressing the 'two-world' concept, that of the outer world which reveals God and that of the inner world within which manifestations of God may be 'inspired'.

The same writer, having 'discovered' God by perceptive means, goes on to assess the reason for what has been perceived.

We read and become wise in the true and great Law . . . the things revealed of the divine state are but for the magnifying of thee (Deftar, (C. p. 31.25-26).

Markah would have gone much further, as we shall see, in assessing the purpose underlying what is perceived in creation, but Amram Darah is usually content to express what he feels in traditional, religious terms.

The sheer magnitude of created things often inspires feelings of wonder and awe, though not quite in the language of the biblical Psalms; so it inspired the High Priest Eleazar:

There is no enduring power like his!

No one could bring to pass works like his!

(C. p. 36.29-30).

Examples could be multiplied to show what aspects of God's activities and what characteristics of his nature are deduced from the perception and contemplation of his works. Most of these exalt God as the magnificent one, the powerful one, etc. Yet there is a higher level of perception, about which we have spoken, that produces deductions of a truer nature. These we shall now examine, one by one. Before we do so, let us ask the question, Do the Samaritans possess their concepts *a priori* or *a posteriori*? From what has been said, it might seem that they gained their knowledge of God in both ways; but it seems hardly likely that a religious community with a long history behind it would *depend* on philosophical principles. Such principles do not appear to have been reliably formulated at the time of Israel's dawn! Without being condemned as guilty of the *argumentum e silentio*, we can assume that what really happened was that the Samaritans by the advent of the Roman empire had begun to cover their religious framework with a veneer of philosophical formulation. Remove the veneer and the basic religious frame is discovered. Let it not be doubted that the Samaritans, like the Judaists, Christians and Muslims, all from a common origin, *presupposed* the existence of God. They could not have deduced it with their background of centuries of religious conservatism.

It may well be that in days when current philosophical concepts were filling the air the Samaritans became more and more susceptible and amenable to advancing notions as formulated at that time. They accepted the existence of God as axiomatic—what religion could not?—but found themselves gradually coming to think about the argument from nature in terms familiar to the philosopher. In the end, presupposing the existence of God as they undoubtedly did, they came to use the cosmological argument for the purpose of demonstrating what kind of 'person' God was and of analysing his attributes.

That this suggested process is almost certainly true in the case of the Samaritans is supported by what many writers say in connection with particular attributes of the Creator. Some of these must be studied in isolation in order that the Samaritan contribution to Near Eastern religious evolution may the better be estimated, or at least set forth, but it must be made abundantly clear—and this we shall have occasion to stress later on—that the Samaritans never thought of any characteristic of the person of God as self-activating. Will, wisdom, power, these are but human concepts of the manifestation

of the same sole Creator. No Gnostic emanation finds a place in the theological scheme. There is no suggestion of God manifesting himself in different 'persons'. Like Islam, Samaritanism steers well clear of any such division of the 'Godhead'. In almost wearisome, repetitious manner the writers emphasize the absolute and indivisible oneness of God.

2. THE ONENESS OF GOD

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.*¹

With this topic we shall begin the examination of the various aspects of the nature and activity of the Creator as perceived by men. There is scarcely any need to point out that like Judaists, Christians and Muslims, the Samaritans are wholeheartedly monotheistic. From Abraham, the progenitor of the elect race, religious belief has been transmitted from generation to generation; so the Samaritan belief is centred on that of the forefathers who received the revelation of God. The monotheism of Abraham is the monotheism of his descendants, the Samaritans, but there is a difference. What Abraham accepted without question, as far as the biblical story tells us, the Samaritans studied anxiously and critically. Like the Judaists, they found the biblical warrant in Deut. 6.4 for the belief in the oneness of God, but they did not make that verse a part of their creed. Not that they ignore it: but a study of Samaritan religious literature makes it quite clear that they do not base their claim to believe in the oneness of God solely on scriptural warrant; they have worked the belief out in the climate of reason and in the sanctuary of the heart.

Before quoting our sources in order to distinguish the peculiarly Samaritan way of regarding the oneness of God, it is fundamental in every way for the student of Samaritanism to disentangle notions of the *unity* of God from his thinking. The Samaritans do not speak of the *unity* of God; such a concept is alien to them. Like Judaist and Muslim, the Samaritan had no reason to believe that God was a unity, that divinity meant a Godhead. He well knew what the Christian controversies were. Had he not lived amongst Christians for centuries? Was not the Bishop of his city present at the all-important Council of Nicaea? No doubt, too, the Samaritans reacted strongly to the Arian controversy in particular. It is made clear throughout the literature that Moses could not be of one

¹ Deut. 6.4.

substance with God. The repetitious insistence on the absoluteness of God's oneness would hardly be necessary unless the Samaritans were conscious of theological dangers surrounding them.

Though Moses becomes *like* the Christ of Christianity, his relation to God is never one of complete involvement and certainly not of unity. Though the Spirit of God is present in the world, it has no dissociation from the all-present (but not pantheistic) God. Everything the Samaritan believed in pointed to, nay proved, that God was one, sole, by himself. These terms are indeed a translation of the very expressions used over and over again by Samaritan writers of all periods. God is one, not so much because the Pentateuch states it to be so, but because the universe, microcosm and macrocosm, declares it in all its being.

It has been thought that there is some relationship between Samaritan and Sadducean theology, at least in some particulars.

In this matter [of the Fatherhood of God] Samaritanism adheres to the older Sadducean theology, a stage which was overcome by the more intense personal religion of the Pharisees.¹

So Abu Said in his translation of the Pentateuch into Arabic avoids by means of paraphrase such phrases as 'my firstborn son' in reference to Israel. There could be no concept of the Fatherhood of God. The Pentateuch does not call God 'Father' and only in a few phrases referring to the (adopted) sonship of Israel is such a conception found by inference.

It was transparent to the Samaritan observer that all created things formed a whole, not a unity, but one manifestation in different degrees or levels of the one God. As Amram Darah says quite specifically:

The universe bears witness that the Lord is one (C. p. 34.8).

As we note in connection with God and creation, the creative act itself demonstrates the oneness of God. Amram Darah puts it:

When thy wisdom saw fit to create, thy power brought together all things at thy word (C. p. 28.7).

This is a less worthy attempt to explain the Samaritan position than that of Markah, whose formulation is that God's creative act involved the will of God, whereby creation was conceived, the wisdom of God, whereby it was planned, co-ordinated and ordered, the power of God whereby it was brought into active being (in the materialist

¹ Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 213.

sense of being), the Word (Logos) being the means whereby the power expressed itself. This has to be regarded as a single act, not as a process. The Samaritan finds it impossible apparently to see these notions as a series. In many places he makes it abundantly clear that God only manifests himself (as perceived by human mind) in such a way. God is no series of interrelated attributes, no totality of parts. He is one! Everything he is, everything he does, every revelation of himself reveals that he is one. Every thing, every aspect of creation shows that all perceptions represent different glimpses of one creative act by one Creator. It is in this context that we judge the Samaritan condemnation of the Judaists' Cherubim and the idolatry of other peoples. These 'innovations' are dangerous, for they suggest that God can be found in actual localities, whereas the one God cannot be found *any* where. Since he is one, he must be everywhere; since he is active everywhere and can be found everywhere, he must be one everywhere!

Here are some of the ways that Samaritan writers try to express this belief.

God did not bear, was not born; he has no second, no companion, and is incomparable. He is alone, separate, pristine, eternal, by himself (C. p. 433.18).

He dwells in an isolated state, has no form; there is none like him; he is matchless, incomparable. He has no place, no bound. Apart in oneness, having none second to him in his divine state . . . (C. p. 435.25).

The sheer quantity of such expressions to be found throughout the liturgies serves to show how anxiously and defensively the Samaritan struggled to express the absoluteness of his belief and the absoluteness of God's oneness. Amram Darah, too, struggles in the Deftar to show how creation declares that God is one.

In the renewal of thy creations it is known that thou art the Fore; by them thou hast made known to all that there is no god but thee . . . Thy works reveal that thou art one alone, for thou hast clothed thy creation with thy providential wisdom, for thou hast made it a wonder, the sight of which evokes praises (C. pp. 28.28-29.3).

Preoccupied with the sheer order of creation, including the continuance and preservation of that order, Amram Darah finds it a matter of awe and wonderment. How can there be such perfection of order? It must be because there is one supreme mind behind it all. There could be no room for a pantheon of gods. How could they unite so completely to produce such order? Thus men cannot help praising

the wonder of the one God. The wonderment inspired by the perception of the order of creation is not restricted to the perception of the visible universe. Greater still is the handiwork of God in terms of the invisible world. This Platonic concept is fundamental to the Samaritan belief about the universe.

Greater still than that which thou hast revealed to the sight is that which thou hast hidden (C. p. 28).¹

This is not the place to speak of the visible and invisible worlds, as this subject will occupy our attention in Part V, but it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the relationship between the visible and invisible is that of oneness. The Samaritans do not specify along Platonic lines what the relationship is in metaphysical terms, but they make their belief clear in other terms. This is that the invisible world is not separated from the visible by space or time. The two are one, perceived in different conditions (of mind). The same man, if he is possessed of wisdom and therefore the perceptive eye of the mind, as Markah puts it, can live and be fully aware of the earthly world and yet know the 'other' world.

The Samaritan Abisha could dream and see what life is like in that world within the cosmic context. He saw history in that world! Thus the mystic of Samaria perceived in cosmic terms *what was and what is yet to be*, a phrase often used by Samaritan mystics in connection with the name of God, i.e. YHWH or Yahweh. We shall describe in Chapter XIX such pictures as Abisha saw, but the phrase serves here to remind us of the cosmic nature of all creation. Man in his totality of being is cosmic; salvation even in its historical form is cosmic. God's creation, visible and invisible, is cosmic. The whole range of human experience is gauged in cosmic terms. There is nothing that is not a manifestation of *the one*, i.e. God.

Further evidence of the Samaritan position in regard to the question of God's oneness is provided by certain variants in the Hebrew of the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Hebrew word *'elōhīm* is a plural word and in several passages in the Hebrew (Masoretic text) the word is followed by a plural verb according to the normal rule that a plural subject has a plural verb. In the Samaritan version the verbs in these passages are found in the singular—no doubt a deliberate alteration. Examples are Gen. 20.13; 31.53; 35.7; Ex. 22.8 (English

¹ For Amram Darah's teaching along these lines see further the writer's 'The Theological Hymns of Amram Darah', *ALUOS* 2, 1961, pp. 54f.

22.9). In Gen. 6.4 the expression 'sons of God' becomes in the Targum 'sons of rulers'; so the Judaist Targum Onkelos. In Gen. 48.16 of the Samaritan version the word 'angel' is changed to 'king', so that God may receive all the glory. According to Gesenius,¹ Abu Said's Arabic version of the Samaritan Pentateuch contains some six hundred cases of this sort of revision.²

We conclude this section with the observation that Samaritan theology begins properly with the belief in the one God. The formal creed does not usually include this statement; it is ever implied when the Samaritan worshipper says, 'I believe in God.'

3 · THE INFINITY OF GOD

*Thou art eternal, from before creation and even after the Day of Vengeance.*³

Having established the sole and unpartnered existence of God, the Samaritan theologian proceeds to assert the one God to be independent of space and time. Although he was responsible for these by the act of creation, his own existence is not in any way governed or confined by them.

In general, God is beyond comprehension, whether from the point of view of his 'whereabouts' or of his state. Tabiah b. Duratha well voices the human awe before the incomprehensibility of God. He asserts (C. p. 79.18) that there is no one among his worshippers who can speak of him in such a way as to demonstrate his state of being. This, he felt, was quite beyond the reach of the human mind. He puts it in an absolute way:

None among us can estimate or explain that which has no explanation or interpretation, namely the explanation of the true nature of his divine state.

He expresses the human limitation by saying that there is a limit to the meditation upon him, and there is no created thing capable of reaching out to or exploring the Creator. By exploring he probably meant defining, as the Semitic word used can have either connotation.

Abisha in more distinctively religious terms puts it thus:

He lives! He is infinite, having no days or hours. It is known that he has no finality and no end that can be visualized (C. p. 498.7).

¹ *De Pentateuchi Samaritani origine*, p. 59.

² Cf. also Samaritan Targum, Ex. 24.10, 11, and Pentateuch, Gen. 1.26, Ex. 20.1. For Rabbinic discussions of this problem see Genesis Rabba, 8.8-9.

³ C. p. 85.2.

Amram Darah a millennium earlier had expressed the same thought, but he added another element in the picture.

He has no beginning and no end, nor is he like any other (created) form. Indeed he is not like anything, nor is anything like him (C. p. 492.13).

Markah, as so often, goes further in his definition:

Who knows *how* he is or understands *what* he is, or knows *where* he is or can reach him? (Memar, IV.10).

Following in the tradition of Markah, Abdullah makes every effort to avoid the pitfalls of anthropomorphism and pantheism:

Knowledge cannot assess him. He has no form, likeness, substance, body . . . God is to be found in all things, yet he who looks shall not behold him.

In connection with this topic and related topics to be examined below, there was an attempt by Samaritan theologians to express their concept of the infinite state of God by the use of negations. This was an approach similar to that of the great Judaist thinker Maimonides (1135-1204). It was thought until only a year or two ago that Maimonides might have influenced Samaritan thinking, because there is a fair amount of fourteenth-century theological material that seems to reflect Maimonides' thinking, but the publication of Markah's great Memar in full changes all this. It would be nearer the mark to suggest that the Samaritans themselves might have had some influence on the current thought systems of the Syrian region, for Damascus, where there was a considerable and active Samaritan community, was also the home of Maimonides and other great thinkers of various faiths, and at about the same time. Ben Manir is the writer who employs the approach of negation most of all. His thesis is that there is no possibility of estimating God's state by the use of calculation, whether Kabbalistic or Gnostic. He is content to think of God simply as the Before, the one before the First, but in each case the attribute is qualified by a negative assertion. In effect what he says is that God is *before the before* and that nothing can be deduced about him in terms of temporal or spatial calculations. Numerical calculation about God's manifestations along Gnostic lines is denied categorically and absolutely. Maimonides takes an almost identical view when he argues:

The negative attributes, however, are those which are necessary to direct the mind to the truths which we must believe concerning God; for, on the one hand, they do not imply any plurality . . .¹

¹ *Guide for the Perplexed*, tr. M. Friedländer, pp. 81-82.

The Samaritan could not be content with this, for he felt obliged to cancel out all possible dubiety about any statement, even to the extent of tedious repetition. Not all Samaritans, however, followed the approach of Ben Manir, for they found it not too difficult to approach the thought of God in positive terms. This was done chiefly by the negating of claims for human merit in terms of perception, not by the negating of God's activity and manifestation in the world. As we have seen, it is human knowledge that is to be denied, not God's expression of himself; it is man's power to evaluate that is limited, not the state or status of God.

If God is infinite, then he must be eternal and everlasting. The stress on the eternal state of God's being is perhaps greater than that on his everlasting state. The difference, though, is usually one of context. In the religious context God is ever manifesting himself as long as the world lasts, i.e. for ever; but in the philosophical context, God is 'out of time', before and after it, i.e. before and after creation.

From the pen of Eleazar comes the typical statement:

Thou art the Lord who existed before creation, and will exist after the Day of Vengeance. Thou art without end (C. p. 35.21).

Such Defter statements are repeated with many variations throughout all the liturgies, but it is Markah in his Memar who best expresses the fuller proposition:

He is the Fore who has no beginning. He is the one who existed above the abyss of the primeval silence. He it is who created when he willed and decided. He is I AM; he is the one who is after the world; just as he was in the first, so will he be in the last (IV.4).

I AM (from Ex. 3.14) is interpreted by the Samaritans as an expression of God's everlasting state. The Arabic rendering of this term varies in different works, but generally the Samaritans understood it to mean 'eternal', 'everlasting', 'unending', 'unbegun', 'unended'. So in the next quotation from the Memar:

He is eternal in his oneness, I AM in divinity, everlasting in awesomeness. His greatness is not localized; indeed he created every place by his power (IV.5).

Just as Markah is positive in his statements about God's eternal and everlasting state, so he is ready to use negation (rather like his co-religionist a millennium later, Ben Manir) in order clearly and categorically to set out the Samaritan position about the infinite state of God's being.

He has no place in which he is known, no area in which he is recognized. He does not reside in a place; he is devoid of locality. He has no place where he can be sought; wherever he is sought he is to be found (Memar IV.7).

This is an important passage in that it demonstrates (1) the Samaritan avoidance of pantheistic concepts, and (2) the fact that although Mount Gerizim is the 'chosen place, the House of God' (Beth-el), where his people can worship him, no place is distinguished as being a location where the essential form of God can be observed. Markah thinks in physical terms rather than in mystical or spiritual. He knows well that perception of God is a matter of degree, largely dependent on the spiritual evolution of the percipient. Since God exists outside of space and time, he cannot be perceived in the three-dimensional environment. Only within the mind, impregnated with the pure light that is in every man who comes into the world, can the nature of God's being be dimly comprehended.

Amram Darah offers an excellent statement:

O I AM, who wast and wilt be, thou wast, neither from any time nor now, and wilt be. Thou art with the generations and their successions. They do not change thee, but thou changest them. Not from any time, not *from* but *before* them art thou, and for uncountable eternity shalt thou be after them (C. p. 491.22f.).

There is no certainty about the exact climate of thought that led Samaritan writers like Amram Darah and Markah to express themselves as they did. They may have been reacting to Christian controversies, but it seems more likely that they were reacting to the Gnostic schools of thought, which influenced both Judaism and Christianity to some extent. The Samaritans, as has already been stated, found it possible to employ Gnostic terminology without at the same time or thereafter adopting its implications. The Samaritan insistence on the infinite and eternal state of the one God, whatever it may have been a reaction to, certainly became a fixed and axiomatic part of their conception of the being of God.

It is a fact that most Samaritan thinkers held to a cosmic view of the universe and a belief in the perfect state of the world, the world being no unity or community of parts, as we shall note when we examine the doctrine of creation. The world, as a planet, does not have any independent existence, for it belongs with the whole cosmos, as does man himself. There can be no end to a perfect creation, a view that the Samaritans derive from their understanding of

Gen. 2.1-2, which they took to mean that God made perfect, not completed, all creation. Since the Samaritan understanding of the notion of perfection involves the concept of absoluteness, no temporal or spatial restrictions could be allowed. Thus all the universe testifies, as Markah puts it, that the Creator is himself perfect, lacking no ultimate or absolute.

It follows that eternal life, or everlasting life as it is often described,¹ belongs to God. Indeed, some writers actually call God 'eternal life'. Abdallah² follows Markah in this and it may be that John 6.68³ had some influence on the Samaritans of the Roman and later eras, for Abdallah seems to reflect Markah's view when he says:

It was a voice (Logos) proclaiming from every direction, its words being assembled from eternal life (C. p. 401.5).

John 6.68 speaks of the 'words of eternal life' and the next verse uses the phrase 'living God', which is as common if not more so in Samaritan religious literature in this context. The Samaritans probably felt it necessary to use this phrase so often because of their concern to avoid the charge of pantheism, for the God who is everywhere is at the same time an *active* God who can be found in his active manifestation by any man who has the right approach to God. The God who is everywhere, 'above and below', is living and active at all times. As he speaks the creative word 'Let there be light', so he ever speaks and can be heard on any occasion, in any locality, by those 'who have ears to hear'.

4 · THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

*All things are subservient to thee, my Lord. All things tremble
for fear of thee.*⁴

The absolute dominion of God over all that he created is a subject which the Samaritans treated along lines familiar to students of the Pentateuch. For the main part they were content to employ the terminology and phraseology of the Law, which in themselves were sufficient to demonstrate the absolute rule of God. Many of the

¹ The Aramaic word *'ālam* (Hebrew *'ōlam*) is used for both.

² Some authorities ascribe this piece to Mattanah (probably also fourteenth century).

³ For the influence of the Johannine literature in general, see the Index of Biblical Passages.

⁴ Abul Hasan, C. p. 71.19.

attributive titles used, however, seem to have been in vogue at different periods. Such phrases as 'King of all', 'King of all living', 'exalted living King', 'God of gods' are commonplace in the liturgies and do not occasion any surprise for the student of the Old Testament or of Judaism or of Christianity. Variations on these themes, suggestive of distinctively Samaritan emphases, are also common. Such are 'King who supplieth', 'King of our spirits', and so on.

It may well be that the Samaritans' extreme stress on God's rulership has a psychological background. There was no Samaritan ruler over Samaria for so many centuries that it became regular practice to attribute the rulership of the land (under the High Priest's administration) and, of course, everything else to God. One clue that the Samaritans were conscious of their perpetual lack of an Israelite king after 722/1 BC, and therefore tended to exalt the status of kingship, is found in their ascription of the title of king to Joseph. Every patriarch receives his distinctive title (e.g. righteous Abraham, innocent Isaac, fearless Jacob) and there were two features in the life of Joseph that placed him on a pedestal which no other man could stand on. One was his purity (because he fled from the harlot and did not defile himself), and the other was his role as ruler next to Pharaoh, despite his Hebrew origin. The emphasis on these, and only these, aspects of Joseph's life does not closely match the Judaist categories, for the latter possessed innumerable legends and traditions about him and there was no need to seek out characteristics to be exalted to such a level. Kingship in Samaritan eyes was therefore something special. According to their chronicles king and priest worked together in the early history of the Israelites in Canaan, and between them carried out all that was necessary in the life of their people. The association of the rulership with the priesthood is a characteristic of the Samaritans' historical concept and probably is to be explained thus: there could be no supreme ruler who was not specially appointed or ordained (anointed). The Judaeans were condemned because they turned to Samuel requesting a king, and according to the chronicles nothing but disaster and religious defilement resulted. The Samaritan concept of kingship is therefore rather different. Here the ruler is to be regarded as subject to the wisdom and authority of the High Priest. Without the High-Priesthood there could be no true, divinely ordained rulership. Indeed, the High-Priesthood involves true sovereignty under God (on behalf of God) and over the people. But the longer the Samaritans them-

selves did not have a human king to reign over them, the more God became in their eyes the ruler *par excellence*.

It is obvious that knowledge of God, derived from the perception and contemplation of his creation, must lead to the concept of God as King, not in any 'royal' sense as in the human situation, but as a supreme being to whom all is subject. Everything ordered, planned and sustained by him must clearly be under his dominion.

The Lord is King and the universe is witness! We turn our faces nowhere but towards thy kingdom. We praise thee, O God, for the universe is thine. Praise be to the God of heaven, the God of the earth, the God of the universe (Prayer of Joshua, C. pp. 4.28-5.9, 15, 17-18).

We shall examine the concept of the kingdom of God later in this section. It is significant in the present context to remember the cosmic view of the Samaritans. God's rulership is not confined to the world and to the affairs of men; it extends everywhere. Some passages tell of his dominion over worlds visible and invisible. It is a cosmic dominion. God is King over all that is. The absoluteness of his sovereignty is often associated directly with his state of oneness. The Samaritan position here is close to that expressed in the Letter of Aristeas:

Our lawgiver (Moses) . . . showed first of all that there is only one God, and his power is manifest throughout all things, every place being full of his dominion; and that nothing of all that men do secretly escapes him, but whatever any one does stands open to his sight, and even what is not yet done.¹

If God is supreme over all, it follows that all is subject to him. The *motif* of subjection is important in Samaritan studies. The emphasis on this is considerably greater than that found in Judaism and Christianity. Islam comes closer to the Samaritan position with its stress on total submission to the absolute one. As Markah puts it (Memar III.5):

Everything is from him and to him everything will return.

This is the simplest expression of the absolute subjection of everything. The source and the destination, a concept familiar from Islam and in Karaite Judaism, are in God. In religious petitions we often read such expressions as 'We flee from thee to thee', where the wrath of God in his judgement is regarded as something to be fled from and the mercy of God is the goal of all who have faith and hope.

¹ Moore, *Judaism* I, p. 372.

A fuller expression of the *motif* of subjection is recorded by the eleventh-century Abul Hasan:

All creations, all creatures bear witness to thee, even the heavens and all their host, earth and its very foundations, above and below—they are thy dominion. All the holy angels exalt thee ever!

There is no kingship but thine and none can perform works like thine. There is nothing in heaven or in earth that is not under thy control. We rely on thy power, for there is none to rely on like thee (C. p. 71.19-23).

Every effort is made, then, to demonstrate the absoluteness of God's dominion. Men and angels, heaven and earth, all come under his direct rule. This is in keeping with the cosmic concept. In the religious environment the sovereignty of God becomes a subject of awe and reverence, praise and thanksgiving, for the Samaritan view of religious fear was that man's subjective status was a blessing. Perhaps the lack of a human king for so long, with his almost certain propensity to error and cruelty—did not history show what kings were like?—led to the idea of and desire for a king who was perfect. Since only God could be perfect, then his dominion was in every way a subject for joy and praise.

We bless, praise, magnify, supplicate, exalt, thank and worship the Lord of the universe (C. p. 7.23).

The need for a supreme King may or may not have arisen because of the human context. It is certain, however, that the Samaritan writers regarded such as most desirable and conceived the idea that a Samaritan people, pure and holy, living in the 'kingdom' of such a King represented the ideal state of being in the world. We shall have more to say about the kingdom of God and about the ideal future later; it suffices here to observe that associated with the attribution of kingship to God is the desire to be his subjects in his kingdom.

The need of the generations [of Samaritans] is for thine eternal rule (C. p. 19.16).

THE POWER OF GOD

Much is written about the power of God. In the section on creation we see that God's power is that which brings into active being what his will has decreed and his wisdom has ordered. The extension of the notion of power lies along the path of notions about divine sovereignty. A supreme King must have supreme power, if all his

dominion is truly to be subject to him. The absoluteness of the range of God's power is expressed by Markah:

His power is in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. There is no place outside his control. He made, fashioned, perfected, set in order, made ready all places. He supplied their needs (Memar VI.1).

Power, control, sustenance are prerequisites of the Creator. It is difficult to say whether Markah conceived the idea that it was because of the perfect state of the ordered universe that his power, as such, was supreme. Despite the categories of will, wisdom and power, which we may differentiate in our examination of the Samaritan teaching, one finds some identification of one with the other. So in some passages, even in Markah's Memar, God's wisdom and power are regarded as synonymous attributes. This may be explained simply by the Samaritan determination to avoid the charge of making God a series of emanations in the Gnostic style, or a unity of attributes in Christian style (as adjudged by the Samaritans and Muslims!).

Human power is not only derived from divine power, but is subject to it. Thus many a supplication is made wherein God's power is requested. Because of the frailty of humanity in every field of activity, the divine power may be 'leaned upon'. Not only divine mercy, but divine power often becomes the subject of petition. When man is evil, he may in his moments of contrition supplicate mercy; when he is weak and the overlord or persecutor is cruel, he may supplicate power. The Samaritans seem to have looked upon the mercy of God as almost identified or identifiable with his power. Mercy is probably a much misunderstood term in the Old Testament; certainly the Samaritans do not appear to have regarded it in quite the same way as other religious groups in the Near East.

By thy beneficence the world came into being; by thy power it is governed; by thy mercy we live in thy dominion (C. p. 18.25).

The most common word for 'mercy'¹ used by the Samaritans in their Hebrew compositions is always plural, and the adjectives that may be used to qualify it are often such adjectives as 'great', 'strong', adjectives frequently used in connection with such ideas as 'force', 'strength', 'power'.

¹ *Raḥamīn* (Aramaic *raḥmayya*). The Hebrew word *hesed*, translated loving-kindness, covenant love, etc., is sometimes a synonym, but *raḥamīn* alone contains the idea of power (quantitative).

The totalitarian control exercised by the supreme King is related to actual events in the historical context. Markah gives much teaching about how God used his power to manipulate the elements in Israel's favour. The four elements, fire, water, earth, air (wind), were manipulated by God on no less than thirty-three occasions in connection with the successful crossing of the Red Sea and the defeat of the Egyptians. In his great picture of these events Markah in his *Memar* (I.10) tells of the protection given to the marching throng of Israel:

By the power of the Good One . . . hedged in by three great fences, cloud, fire and holy spirit, one leading, one illumining, one protecting.

In Book II he describes in considerable detail the means adopted by God for the use of the elements to bring about the deliverance of his people.

There is always a tendency (not more than that in Samaritan teaching) to think, as in Judaism, of the glory of God, e.g. as an active principle, working on behalf of God. The 'powers' of God can function on his account. It is always difficult to avoid describing the activities of God in terms of his attributes; every Near Eastern religion has this problem. The Samaritans manage to avoid it successfully in the main, but they do not hesitate to express the power of God in terms of 'the powers above', by which is meant the angelic hosts who are ever at hand to work God's purposes out. We shall examine the role of angels in Samaritan thought in Chapter XX, but we have to note several facts about 'powers' in general. The Samaritan word for power is *hila* or *haila* and some scholars have thought that the Samaritan scribes were really speaking of 'ēla or 'ila (a change of only one consonant in Hebrew or Aramaic). Thus Cowley¹ equated 'power' with 'God', regarding the vocative usage (frequent in the Liturgy) thus. This view is almost certainly wrong (a) because the Samaritans' own Arabic rendering is 'power' and not 'God', and (b) because elsewhere the plural of *hila* or *haila* is often used for 'the powers', referring to the heavenly host, i.e. the denizens of the invisible world.² The mystic in his contemplation may have a vision of the invisible realm and he may see the angels who dwell there. Moses

¹ *The Samaritan Liturgy* II, p. xxxv.

² But God is called 'Power' elsewhere; e.g. in the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, 'The one saying of Jesus it contains ("My power, my power, you have forsaken me") is a forced revision, or a mistranslation, of the genuine word, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15.34 and parallels).' Grant and Freedman, *The Secret Sayings of Jesus*, p. 42.

for one is often accredited with having actually penetrated the barrier or veil between the two worlds, especially during the theophany on Mount Sinai, and is said to have dwelt with the angels. Lesser beings have dreams or visions in which they see these beings. In the descriptions of such visions 'powers' are mentioned as well as 'angels'.

The relationship between the Pauline 'angels, principalities and powers' and the Samaritan picture of the unseen host is not clear. In Heb. 6.5, which is not regarded as Pauline, the Greek word for 'the powers' (of the age to come) is the plural of *dunamis*, the common word for 'power'. We read in Enoch 61.10 of 'all the angels of power and all the angels of principalities'. So we may compare the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Testament of Levi 3 and other passages. We cannot enter into this in a general work on theology, as there are too many specialized matters to be taken into account. All we can say is that the relationship of the King of the universe to the 'powers' of the unseen world has yet to be worked out properly. What we can glean from the writings of the Samaritans on this topic is set out in Chapter XX. It is enough for our purpose here to observe that the Samaritans seem to have believed that the heavenly hosts helped in the execution of God's will. Another way of putting it is that God's power could be expressed through his heavenly hosts.

That the glory of God in the wider sense of his greatness, majesty and grandeur is a subject for thanksgiving is apparent from beginning to end of the festival liturgies. That the very creations demonstrate his glory and greatness is stated over and over again. In addition we read frequently that the creations themselves praise God (cf. the Judaist Psalms). In the Samaritan sense, creation is so perfect in its order and harmony, and not so much stress is laid on its vastness, that all its aspects and manifestations may be said to exude praise of him who made it.

All creatures give praise in abundance to the Lord . . . the heavens and also all creatures recount the glory of the Lord (C. p. 492.22-24).

Thus the cosmic setting is complete. The wonder of God's handiwork is not only to be perceived in his creations; the very creations seem to cry out for sheer joy as they radiate the being of the Creator.

5 · THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Some preliminary remarks on the subject of God's kingdom may be made here, although the complete picture can only be presented

when consideration has been given to the Samaritan view of the ideal future and the after-life. It has been stated in other connections that the Samaritans felt free to expand an idea and develop it within their religious framework where there existed biblical warrant for at least the essence of the idea. In connection with the kingship and kingdom of God the Pentateuch cannot be said to have set out any established principle, but the association of a garden with a kingdom in idealistic terms is certainly found in Num. 24.6-7:

v.6 Like valleys that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters.

v.7 . . . his (Israel's) king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

This picture is associated in Samaritan minds with the statement that God planted a garden to the East in Eden (Gen. 2.8). The picture of the future Eden (future in the sense only that full and immortal life in it follows the earthly life) is painted in many pictures, one of which is taken from Num. 24.7. Yet the idea of a kingdom ruled by God is found in another connection.

And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19.6).

The idea of a theocracy developed from this (as happened, too, in Judaism) and it came to be believed that a nation of pure (physically, spiritually, ceremonially) Samaritans under a perfect High Priest would exist in a perfected world, after the cataclysmic events preceding the Day of Judgement. The only problem about this subject is that Samaritan writers differ on whether this kingdom, called the New Kingdom or the Second Kingdom, is to be terrestrial or celestial, and we shall examine the problem in connection with the after-life in Chapter XXI.

That one view was that there would be a perfect kingdom of God on earth is evidenced in the liturgies, but Markah does not say much about this hope in his writings, in the *Defter* or in his *Memar*. Perhaps the idea of a terrestrial kingdom developed in mediaeval times from a previously held, but not received idea in much earlier times. There seems to be no evidence in the writings of the Roman era for such an idea. God is styled King, admittedly, in the *Defter* several times, but reference to a kingdom of God occurs only once in that collection. This is in the Prayer of Joshua, an important and probably ancient prayer in the oldest part of the *Defter* (C. p. 4), and it is mentioned by Abul Hasan (C. pp. 70f.). There was no

hesitation in calling God King of all earth's kingdoms in the sense that all created beings are subject to the Creator. So Jacob the Rabban (fourteenth century) describes God (C. p. 656). Abisha, on the other hand, seems to have favoured the notion of such an earthly kingdom:

The King has no end! But a kingdom will arise out of the melting pot and it will be our life all our days (C. p. 700.6).

This seems to refer to the hope that out of the cataclysmic events of the last days before the Judgement there will arise a new kingdom under God; whether this means *the* kingdom of God is difficult to say. More light will be shed on the problem when dealing with the Samaritan Taheb (Messiah-like figure), one of whose functions is to herald in a state of perfection on God's behalf.

Abisha and others liked to refer to God as King 'both above and below', i.e. King of the two worlds, the visible and the invisible. But it is Markah who first clearly refers to such a post-Judgement kingdom, when he writes in a vein that is reminiscent of the Book of the Revelation.

The perfect ones will not be in poverty, nor will they be afflicted in judgement, for they walked in the way of righteousness. They have rest in the Day of Vengeance from all retribution; their souls have relief *within the kingdom* (Memar IV.12).

Even here it is possible to argue that Markah contemplated some sort of order in a new world, i.e. in the world renovated through the work of the Taheb, but there must remain some uncertainty about the subject, particularly as references to the kingdom of God are infrequent.

Let us note a few quotations which reveal how far the Samaritans were prepared to go in unequivocal language. The following quotation, already used, is from the eleventh century:

All creations . . . bear witness to thee, even the heavens and all their host, earth and its very foundations, above and below—they are thy dominion.

There is no kingship but thine . . . There is nothing in heaven or in earth that is not under thy control (C. p. 71.10f.).

This kind of statement may well suggest that the Samaritans were not prepared in any official sense to limit the concept of God's dominion to a kingdom. It was a concept, like that of kingship, that had too many earthly analogies of an unpleasant kind! The immediate appearance of the angels after the mention of the dominion

of God (in the first, longer form of the quotation on p. 76 above) is really typical of the view of God as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Ruler.

In studying the Samaritan teaching about the eras of divine favour and disfavour respectively we shall have further occasion to think of a kingdom. In the later and modern Samaritan thought the idea of a sort of millennium crept in, although it is never specifically stated to be such. We read of an everlasting commonwealth of the faithful, initiated by the Taheb, but lasting till after the Day of Judgement. This need not mean that the commonwealth will exist in celestial environment, but may simply mean that earth itself will take on a new form—exactly what is not stated—and such a form, even if permanently and incorruptibly physical, that it could be regarded as virtually celestial *in essence*.

May they celebrate this day (of atonement) for a hundred years and may it return to them every year with joy and tranquillity in the days of the Taheb. May the tabernacle be nigh, radiating his favour upon the mount of his presence. *May the kingdom last for ever*—until after the Day of Judgement (C. p. 683.23-25).

If the kingdom, possibly envisaged in a rather vague way, is to be so perfect as to be virtually celestial, but located on Mount Gerizim, then we must explain the Samaritan failure to speak of it in concise terms because of their more comprehensive, cosmic view of the universe. The worlds visible and invisible cannot be regarded as two worlds in any separable sense. Physical or spiritual, terrestrial or celestial, to the Samaritan mystic it is all one. The kingdom of God in the world (or better in the universe, the 'house' of God) need not be explained precisely, since the Samaritans themselves apparently did not feel the need to do so.

Whatever we call the future realm of perfection, commonwealth or kingdom, ideal world or ideal community, in the end it comes to the dominion of the one infinite God, and all humanity is one with God under his sovereignty.



BELIEF IN GOD (B)

I · THE NATURE OF GOD'S BEING

*Thou art hidden, but nothing that is hidden is unseen by thee.
In thy greatness thou art hidden from those who see, but in deeds
done thou art revealed to minds.¹*

SO AMRAM DARAH presents the Samaritan conception of the active God who is ever 'behind the human scene'. We have already noted that God is incomprehensible and beyond human assessment. Markah sets out the case clearly when he writes:

There is no origin to his power, no offshoot of his sovereignty. He himself is the origin of the world and the offshoot of his creation. No beginning is known to him. He is eternal! He has no beginning and no end. He it is who knows what has been and knows what is yet to be. He reveals himself in majesty, but is concealed from all. He is never observed² (Memar I.2).

There are many such passages which could be quoted to show that the Samaritans never became bogged down in the quicksand of negating God 'out of existence'. They certainly used negatives in plenty to say what God is not, in order to demonstrate that he has no analogies, but they were equally insistent on the positive approach that *God is ever active*. Throughout Samaritan thinking this twofold theme is to be found. Whenever a passage occurs dealing with the negation of human analogy, it is followed by and often interwoven with the positive assertion of the incomprehensible one's active manifestation in human life.

There is always some doubt about what the Samaritan writer means by the Aramaic word *'elahūta*; it is usually rendered 'divinity' and sometimes 'Godhead', but the latter is an untrustworthy rendering, involving the concept of unity rather than oneness—this the Samaritan could not allow. The term 'divinity' seems the better.

¹ C. p. 492.5f.

² Cf. John 6.46.

One might tend to think of such a term as an abstract notion containing no activating principle, but to the Samaritan it contained *only* the activating principle, for God could not be conceived of in the human mind except as an active being. Illustrations of this theme abound in the literature.

Abdallah ever thinks of the basic attributes of God as active ones. God appears to him in the threefold capacity of Creator, Judge, and Redeemer, and he finds difficulty in speaking of God as unsubstantial, incomprehensible being. Markah could think of God thus, but equally he was to the fore in stressing the incomprehensible mercy of God, as it is revealed in the active scene of salvation. Something of the active sense of divinity is modified when Abdallah sets out (C. p. 213) the threefold function of God in the human scene as omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient. In religious terms he expresses God as 'conqueror in all battles (on Israel's behalf) and performer of all kinds of wonders'; then 'he is to be found in all things, the possessor of all places, present to those who seek him', and finally 'wisest of the wise, who knows things that are concealed'.

The metaphysical attributes are never shunned by the Samaritan thinker, although he much prefers to concentrate his praise on the active God in history. Like the writer of James 1.17 ('... with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change'), the Samaritan has plenty to say about the incorporeal, unsubstantial state of God's being. The unchanging, unalterable God, as seen through Aristotle's eyes, is the same God who changes and alters human situations within the sphere of salvation. How often the liturgists say, 'Thou art unchangeable, but bringest changes.'

In order to avoid saying that God himself intervenes in a personal way of history, Abdallah stresses the fact that it is

Thy power and thy mind (that) continually abide in every action (C. p. 373.30).

R. J. F. Trotter has contrasted the Brahman view with the Samaritan on this point,¹ and distinguished the Brahman SIVA (*stasis*) and SAKTI (*dunamis*), the former being consciousness, the latter power (action). The Samaritan would not agree to these categories as far as the God of Israel is concerned, and he would be unwilling to draw any sort of distinction between God's being (essence) and his nature (person). The Samaritan view is that the essence of God, like his

¹ In his dissertation on the fourteenth-century ideological background of the Samaritans, 1962 (see Bibliography, p. 463).

personal nature, is active and activating. So the Durran statement about the activity of the infinite God:

O beneficent one who bestows good on the world . . . we have no source of reliability but thee. All other sources of trust fail and perish.¹ All kings are liable to change, but thou art the King who changest not, unending in limitless grandeur, whose dominion has no finality (C. p. 40.3).

It must be remembered that the Samaritans, founding their belief on the Pentateuch, had their limits, and that they would not go beyond the limits allowable by biblical warrant. God was essentially the providential one. He appeared in history and could only be regarded in a phenomenological way. Yet they heaped up epithets and attributes where these could be held to reflect the biblical view. So the forty-eight attributes of the Pentateuch give way before the hundred and sixty of the Deftar.² 'Divinity' as an epithet or attribute is a slow starter. It was a term that lacked positive, active connotation, and had to be restricted to the *essence* of the active God, no real distinction being made between essence and activity (power), being and manifestation.

We come now to the question: What did the Samaritans think about the being of God? Has God substance? Can he be considered to have some sort of body?

Everywhere we find the categorical and unyielding reply, No! We have no information about how early they conceived of God as having no substance or form. No doubt they were involved in the arguments on this topic that were in vogue throughout the early centuries of the Christian era. The impact of these discussions must have been considerable on a people whose religious development enabled them to evolve in their formulation of doctrine, a people whose sacred book did not answer many theological problems for them.

The Samaritan position can be stated from the time of Markah and his associates onwards. It is well to remember the great fourth-century controversy that raged in Antioch in Syria, and later in Egypt; in both countries there lived huge Samaritan communities. Although the Samaritans did not have to rethink their doctrine of the person of Moses in the light of the Nicene discussions about whether Christ was of *one substance with* God or of *like substance with* him, the whole question of the 'substance of God' must have been

¹ See Cowley's footnote 2.

² According to Trotter's reckoning.

very much to the fore in their thinking and argumentation. Amram Darah asserted the Samaritan position concisely by stating that 'God is without substance', and describing him as 'he whom nothing resembles'. These statements and very many others of the same ilk are frequent in the writings of the Roman era as well as in those of the mediaeval period.

Clarification of the position comes from the eleventh-century Abul Hasan, who could be described as the last of the 'classicists' as far as the doctrine of God is concerned, because of the dependence he reveals on the writers of the Golden Age and his development of some of their thinking along the classical lines. He puts it thus:

He lives, but not like any other thing that lives, not in any substance and without breath of life (C. pp. 79.33-80.1).

This notion was no doubt derived by means of contradistinction from the fact that the Pentateuch states that God breathed life into man. The principle of dissociation is ever active in the formulation of doctrinal assertions. In the same manner Ben Manir writes that the voice of God did not issue from some physical organism. In the study of creation we learn more about the principle of dissociation, which often involves such simple negations as 'He did not create with hands'.

In furtherance of the principle an important teaching about Moses is stressed; this is in regard to Moses' encounter with God on Mount Sinai, where we are told in biblical language that

There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew *face to face* (Deut. 34.10).

The Samaritans often quote this and other such passages, but the exegete usually makes it plain that this was no physical experience. The implication is that it was a meeting of form with form, i.e. the form of God and the form of Moses. What is meant by the term 'form' (Aramaic *zalma*) is considered later in the chapter on creation. Let us note at this point that the distinctive feature of the human, as distinct from the animal or the tree, is the *form*, ordered and arranged by the wisdom of God once his will had decreed that there should be such a creature.

In order to gain some idea of the concept of the unsubstantial God, who is nevertheless the ever-active Lord of life, let us observe some of the ways in which his activity is described. By this means, although it necessitates some repetition of what has been alluded to

above, we can glimpse something of the picture of God seen through Samaritan eyes.

God sees without eyes, hears without ears, does not wax old, has no dwelling places, not one in heaven or earth (C. p. 181.33f. and 29).

Ben Manir is really telling his fellow Samaritans that God is active in a way that no human can be, that he does not come under the restrictions of human flesh and that he is not, like humans, to be located or localized. Abdallah takes us further into the immediate question from the metaphysical point of view when he writes in typical vein:

There is none beside him from before the beginning. There was no beginning to his existence. He is one alone, without partner, associate or second. He has no likeness, image, self or light.¹ He knows without mind, sees without eye, hears without ear . . . calls without the use of voice (C. p. 213).

There are scores of such assertions found *passim* throughout the liturgies, from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries. It could be easily adjudged that Abdallah had gone too far in that he seems to make God a principle rather than a person. If God has no self, how can he have personal characteristics like love, mercy, patience, and so on? This is perhaps the greatest single theological problem confronting the Samaritans, for their philosophical background accredited to God an unsubstantial existence, while their religious training and faith taught them of a God who loves, saves and cares. No real attempt was made in any deliberate way to bring about a union of these two, except for the claim, as we have noted before, that the unsubstantial God is always an active God. No philosophical harmonizing of the two views was successfully worked out. Perhaps the Samaritan did not consider it necessary.

We must think of God before the creation and the existence of heaven and other forms as himself having no breath or soul, image or form, substance or body. We may consider that he had his own unparalleled and quite unique essence. This would fit the facts as Samaritan writers have left them for us. Markah expressed the limitless nature of God by saying:

God is eternal in his state. He does not increase or decrease (Memar IV.5).

This is to say, God is beyond the realm of time and unchangeable in his active being. The unique, unparalleled state of God is well

¹ These terms (*demūt*, *zalmā*, *nepheš*, *nūr*) are standard metaphysical language.

expressed in Markah's formal statement found in Book VI.1 of his *Memar*:

God of gods, owner of divinity, possessor of eternity, everlasting in sovereignty, Lord of oneness, one, peerless, mighty, awesome, faithful; fashioner, orderer of all by his command (Logos), without help, without associate, without a second, without any companion, without any being connected with him.

THE AVOIDANCE OF ANTHROPOMORPHISM

It follows from all that has been said to this point that the Samaritans would make every effort to avoid anthropomorphic descriptions and concepts of God. This they do in the main with comparative success. One method was the use of negation, but in avoiding the extremes of the Gnostic Basilides, for example, they were obliged to make some, indeed many, positive remarks about God's activity. By concentrating their attention on God's intervention in history through the manipulation of the elements and his self-manifestation through such supernormal means as cloud or fire, they retained, despite the limitations imposed by the Pentateuch itself, the flavour of the supernormal and the supramundane. For some reason, however, almost all Samaritan writers who touch on the subject are quite willing to stress the belief (found in the Pentateuch) that the Law was written 'with the finger of God'. The usual explanation is that the 'finger' of God really means the fire which engraved itself into the tablets of the Law, leaving columns of writing for all time. This may seem an inadequate attempt to avoid anthropomorphic description of God's activity, but we may fairly argue that some important point in the Pentateuchal teaching was often expressed in anthropomorphic terms, such as 'the finger of God' (Ex. 31.18),¹ and that therefore the Samaritans were obliged to retain it. To alter the expression to more 'convenient' language or to avoid the expression altogether would not only represent the admission of exegetical defeat, but it would be out of keeping with the very existence of the Samaritan community, who claimed after all to be what others were not, namely the 'Keepers (*Shamerim*) of the Law'. On the other hand, the expression may have originally had some figurative meaning and should not be treated too literally. We have the expression 'finger of God' in a quite definitely figurative way in Ex. 8.19 from the mouth

¹ It is interesting that this and other such expressions are found in the E (northern) stratum of the Pentateuch, which may account for the Samaritan retention of them.

of Pharaoh's magicians. This would be parallel to the common figure in biblical Hebrew of the 'hand of God', meaning the 'power of God', a figure frequently applied to human beings also.

When Abdallah wrote of the 'finger of fire' instead of 'the finger of God', he may have been making a concession to mediaeval mysticism, or he may have been making a deliberate attempt to remove an anthropomorphic expression.

The second way to avoid anthropomorphism was, as has been stated, to use negation. Soon after the time of Markah and Amram Darah lived a Christian who probably wrote the four works traditionally ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite.¹ His famous method of negating God in order to make the deity known may reflect a still earlier practice in which the Samaritans, too, were involved, but somehow one feels obliged on reading the relevant material to regard the Samaritan approach to this as always less irrational and less extreme. The Gnostics who went so far as to talk of the non-existent God creating a non-existent creation did not and could not make any successful appeal to the thinker of Samaria. The latter did not like any more than the Gnostic to speak of God in human terms, but he was so concerned to express the ever-active deity that he could not be led along the path of negation to its end.

2 · THE TRANSCENDENCE AND IMMANENCE OF GOD

*Look down upon us, O our Lord. We have nowhere before us to
turn except to thee, for thou art merciful.*²

Pentateuchal language is abundant when it comes to describing God in his transcendent state. The Samaritans employ all the biblical terms, of course, but they extended the doctrine of God's transcendence by their insistence on the ever-active nature of the God of heaven. They have rather more to say about God as immanent, and in this they went a good deal further than the Pentateuch. So often isolated, so often the subjects of violent repressive persecutions, they brought God into their midst more and more, as it were. As time and repression went on, God was related increasingly to the sacred mountain, and, as we shall see in Part Five, the transcendent God was brought into the mystical atmosphere of the 'gateway to heaven', as writers describe the 'mountain of blessing'. Living during the period

¹ See the remarks of A. C. Bouquet in *Sacred Books of the World*, 1954, pp. 200f.

² From Markah's much-loved poem, C. p. 12.29.

of formation of current ideologies that were circulating throughout the Hellenistic and Roman empires, they found much that helped them to further what the Law said about the immanence of the transcendent God in the priestly stratum of the Pentateuch. Their teaching, on the philosophical side, about the cosmic universe and the all-pervading and innate light enabled them to see the Most High God, Creator of the universe, as one who is everywhere and to be found in any place where repentant and sincere man seeks him. In this sense God is everywhere but *no where!*

A bridge had to be constructed across the two conceptions of transcendence and immanence, and this the Samaritans found to be no impossible task of erection. Several Pentateuchal concepts provided the girders for such a bridge and these we shall note as we proceed from the study of the transcendence to the immanence of the deity.

The Samaritan statements about the transcendence of God are very much what we might expect in view of what has been said about God in other connections and what will be said about his creative work. The modern Samaritans are able to say with Tabiah b. Duratha:

Thou art he who reignest over worlds: look down from heaven in thy love (C. p. 79.2-3).

So Abul Hasan and almost all liturgists can write of God 'having dominion eternally above and below'. There is no division of the activity or state of God in terms of the two worlds. These worlds, the visible and the invisible, are one as God is one and all creation is one. God's transcendent sovereignty is over a single universe, whether in its visible or invisible form.

The expression 'look down from heaven, thy dwelling place' is familiar to us from other Near Eastern religions and is warranted from the Pentateuch itself. The Samaritans found that expression very helpful in their supplications. They knew full well that God does not literally 'look down' upon earth, as the old cosmology had it, but it was a religious expression which had acquired sanctity over the ages. 'Look down in thy love' is perhaps the best Samaritan example of the approach to the transcendent God. Certainly the Samaritans were aware of the implications of saying that God 'looked down' on the earthly scene, and some attempt was made, quite unnecessarily perhaps, to expound it. It was too anthropomorphic an expression

to be natural to Samaritan thinking, despite its long sanctity. Here is the typical way of explaining it:

He is like one observing, but his observation is not like that of ordinary (human) observers (C. p. 185.12-13).

Abdallah, as so often, is the mediaeval writer who seeks clarification of doctrine. He attempted to explain the activity of the transcendent God in human life by asserting that it was God's power and mind that were behind all his doings, and he avoided direct attribution of divine activity in the world to the God of heaven. It is possible to argue that this principle reflects or parallels the Brahman SAKTI, the conscious being, as distinct from SIVA (cf. the unmoved mover of Aristotle). The Samaritans were well aware of the teaching of Aristotle¹ and his school of thought, and the various offshoots of his system. How much they were influenced directly or indirectly by such philosophies we do not know.

One feature often stressed in connection with the transcendent nature of God is its purity. The pure light that preceded creation is discussed elsewhere and it may be that the Samaritans developed their view of the pure, transcendent God from the philosophical or metaphysical standpoint. On the other hand, the Pentateuch gave warrant for such a belief—if it was not obvious enough already. Stress on the pure state of God's being comes first from the eleventh-century writer Abul Hasan, when he writes:

Pure art thou eternally. *Thy pure state fills all the world.* Thou art too pure for any sins (of men). King of all kings, the pure ones worship thee (C. p. 70.11-12).

The relation of the pure ones, i.e. the righteous ancestors of Israel, to God need not concern us at this point, but it is a relation with cosmic significance. The ultimate state of the pure light, which shone most radiantly in these forefathers and supremely in Moses, was *of* God. The picture presented of a world filled with that pure state of being is an idealistic one at first sight, but it really reflects the more basic teaching that cosmic creation is a pure and perfect (whole) thing. Men may blind themselves to that purity, to that light innate in their own being, and hence for them God is transcendent rather than immanent, but the universe nevertheless continues eternally in God's (and its) pure state.

The transcendent state is often referred to as the *glory* of God. There is no hypostasis here. One manifestation of God's active being

¹ Chronicle II mentions his existence and work.

observed by perceptive men is the radiance (glory) of his activity in the world. Those who can perceive are filled with rapture at the contemplation of what they have perceived. They are filled with light, and indeed the ability to comprehend the transcendence of God is the ability to comprehend or apprehend the true (i.e. pure and perfect) light 'that enlightens every man' (cf. John 1.9). God's glory, so often referred to in the Law itself, is never an emanation from God as in Gnostic thought; it is the visible sign (as perceived by the mind) of the radiant and transcendent one. The sun, moon and stars but reflect his glory. So true and sincere repentance demonstrates the glory of God *at work in man*. So, too, men in their nigh perfect state, as in the case of the righteous three and Moses, are 'filled with (or 'full of') glory'. The Samaritans have a great deal to say about the glory of man and they mean the glory of the perfect life, the perfection of life in man. This glory in man is related to the glory of the immanent God just as much as to that of the transcendent God, if we may thus differentiate for convenience.

Markah is often the liturgist who sets out the most advanced concept of the Samaritan mind, and he was never superseded in this. He loved to integrate the various characteristics of the ever-active and transcendent God and bring them down, as it were, to human level. When we consider the immanent state of God below, we shall better observe how Markah and others realized that the transcendent state of God could only have meaning if it manifested *in the world*. Samaritan poetry has little to say about the transcendent state of the deity as an isolated phenomenon in the celestial sphere. It is always brought into the human situation.

One other feature of transcendence that calls for comment because of its importance to the Samaritan is that the absolute oneness of God is the basic factor in the claim for the transcendence of God. If there had been some sort of trinitarian doctrine or belief in Gnostic-style emanations, or some conception of a heavenly council as in Judaism, the Samaritans from their point of view would have felt less able to extol God as transcendent. The purity, the glory, the oneness of God would have become sullied as they saw it, for it was his absolute oneness without qualification of any sort that gave them their concept of the cosmic world, the cosmic state of man's being, and the cosmic scheme of salvation. Everything in the cosmic scheme was involved with the oneness of God's being. It was all, in a phrase, 'geared into' one power; it was ordered by one wisdom; it was en-

gendered by one will. Thus God expressed himself in cosmic creation—sole, unpartnered, unassociated—and so everything that existed was one.

It thus follows that the Samaritans found it impossible to speak of God as 'Father' or to think of 'his Man' (Moses) as his 'son'. They could go so far as to speak of Moses as the 'son of his House', but never as the son of God. Despite Deut. 32.6, no development could have taken place in terms of duality or trinity. That God could have relationships within his own being was as impossible to the Samaritan mind as the notion that he could or did emanate powers or beings *from* himself. He could be called 'King of our spirits', 'King of the universe', but he could not be called 'Father of men', only 'Creator' of them. This would involve a relationship between God and men that would make inconceivable the transcendent being of God.

God had revealed himself to the nation in history in a transcendent way. Did not his glory lead them out of Egypt? Did he not work wonders at the Red Sea? This is not, in Samaritan eyes, the expression of the truly *immanent* nature of God, for they did not conceive of God's immanence in that sort of way, or at least only to a limited degree. Theological and doctrinal evolution had been going on throughout the centuries after these events, and the appeal to the transcendent God had a national rather than an individual reference. The appeal to the immanent God belonged much more to the outpouring of the individual heart.

THE POWER OF THE NAME OF THE TRANSCENDENT GOD

An important concept of the Samaritan mind which has a close counterpart in Judaism, as later in Islam, is the power in the right use of the name of God. The Samaritans, like the Judaists and early Christian fathers, had much to say about the mystical power of the right use of the true name (the Tetragrammaton) of God, and the present writer has made some preliminary observations on this matter from the Samaritan point of view elsewhere.¹ It is beyond our scope here to work out every detail of the various beliefs about the name of God as found in the literature, but something of the value of its use can be ascertained in the present context.

By his name he will bless us; by his great and holy name he will look down upon us from his dwelling (C. p. 489.4).

¹ 'The Tetragrammaton in Samaritan Liturgical Compositions', *TGUOS* 17, 1959, pp. 37-47.

It is impossible to determine what is meant by God's blessing men by his name. Perhaps this fourteenth-century reference reflects the views of Islam as it appeared in sectarian form in Damascus. It is, however, possible that the Deuteronomic expression 'bless in the name' of the Lord, which has priestly application, is fundamentally the same as that found in passages such as that just quoted. Whatever be the truth of the matter, we have better understanding of the usage in the context of transcendence. It seems best, judging from the Samaritan evidence available, to regard the name of God (which in Samaritanism means nothing but the Tetragrammaton YHWH, Yahweh) as a vignette of God. Despite their excellent attempts, successful in the main, to describe the nature and being of God, the Samaritans, like all religious communities, could not claim to comprehend God. A name was something that could be understood, or at least used! In very ancient times, and even in some quarters in mediaeval times, the name of a spirit or demon, when known, gave the exorcist power over the spirit or demon. In the Semitic world there is plenty of evidence for such an ancient practice. The use by Judaists and Samaritans of phylacteries (cf. Matt. 23.5) suggests a similar origin. Samaritan phylacteries¹ contain all the names of God, the Tetragrammaton being the chief, and it was believed that the wearing of such 'amulets' (which is no doubt what they were for the ordinary people) or testimonials to belief in God gave the wearer protection against evil influences. The greatest protection came, it was believed, from the name of God, the Tetragrammaton in particular, for that was the name of the God of gods, the Most High in heaven, whose transcendent power was supreme over all other powers.

Every religious work in Islam and in late Samaritanism begins with the words 'In the name of God . . .' This may be no more than a pious practice that gradually became standard, but it may also have its origins in ancient superstitions. We cannot be certain about the history of such beliefs as far as the Samaritans are concerned, for the available information is scanty in the extreme, but we can be sure of the importance the Samaritans attached to the value of possessing the name of the Lord. By this is meant actual possession of the name *on the person*. In saying this, we do not forget that the Deuteronomic purpose is very different; we judge by the practice

¹ For the subject of Samaritan phylacteries see J. Bowman, 'Phylacteries', *TGUOS* 15, 1955, pp. 54f.

as we perceive it, not by the 'reconstructed' origin in the priestly setting. The Judaist *Shem ha-Mephorash* is found among the Samaritans as the *Shem ha-Mithpares* and consists of a few columns on strips of parchment. The columns contain a large number of names of God derived from the Pentateuch, and some of them contain in addition various permutations of these names which have much meaning and value for the mystic (Kabbalist). The possession on the person of such things is derived directly from Deut. 6.8; 11.18, but the practice of 'possessing' the names of God was an extension not demanded by the biblical injunction. In defence of the Samaritan position, however, it has to be stated that the demonic aspect of 'alien and harmful influences' did not receive a place in the Samaritan belief, for it never found room for any demonology. Not that the concept of protection was not present! There were hostile forces of a human kind militating against the Samaritans. The possession on the person of the names of the transcendent God was believed, even by priests, to offer some power over which the enemy could not prevail.

Something of the Samaritan belief about the power of the name is set out, in very different terms, by Markah in his *Memar*. From this we gain some insight into the characteristic Samaritan view of the *fullness* of the name of God. Speaking of the name which God gave to Moses at his call, a name not known to the patriarchs, Markah writes:

I will reveal to you my great name YHWH.¹ I did not reveal it to the righteous of the world. It is a glorious name which *fills the whole of creation*. By it the world is bonded together and all the covenants with the righteous are bound by it for ever. Since you (Moses) are with the Most High . . . I have revealed to you my great name (I.4).

Judging from wider reading of the literature, this means that there was at one time a belief that the name of God was a microcosm of all being, or if we judge from the meaning of the Hebrew phrase 'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh (I AM THAT I AM) it is the macrocosm of all being, the world being a lower manifestation. Creation in the widest

¹ Almost always this name is preferred, though pronounced *Shemah* (= the Name), which practice gave rise to the Judaist belief that the Samaritans worshipped a god called Ashima (cf. II Kings 17.30). However, we have information from Theodore (Qu. in Ex. xv, MPG 80, 244B, cited by Moore, *Judaism* I, pp. 426f.) that in the fifth century the Samaritans had a pronunciation of the name which almost agrees with what modern scholars believe on grammatical grounds to be the original sound of the name, namely YABE or YABHE (YĀVĒ).

sense was 'involved' in what is meant by I AM THAT I AM. It was a power binding all things together, not however in the sense that all things exist as separate parts and become bonded or blended into one great whole, and thus giving creation its state of oneness in and with God. Hence the patriarchal covenants are cosmically viewed. Moses, being what he was, the pre-existent Logos full of the pure light, could receive and possess the name on behalf of all men. From that time men could become conscious of God in a fuller way. Before Moses there was a different dispensation, when men, even righteous men, had a more limited understanding and perception of God. Now under the new dispensation men could see, *via* Moses, the fuller revelation of God to the cosmic world.

Some idea of the power wielded by Moses through possession of the name of the transcendent God is gained, for example, from the Malef 146:

When the apostle smote the sea with the rod,¹ he proclaimed the name inwardly and the Lord sent the sea back. . . .

Faced as all Samaritans were throughout history with the many interpretations of the meaning of God's name (and scholars today are still producing interpretations!), Markah has this to say:

All the names of God are attributive except the name YHWH, which does not consist of any attribute (Memar, II.9).

This is an important assertion, because it reveals how the Samaritan faced the problem. He did not give much weight to the explanation that YHWH was derived from the verbs HAYA or HAWA, from which the modern spelling YAHWEH is derived. Names like 'mighty', 'merciful' and a host of others were attributes, because they reflected some aspect of God as he revealed himself in history. The name YHWH according to Markah does not come within the category of the other names. It has reference to God's being, his essential state, and thus has no reference to human perception of him. Thus we can well understand that the Samaritan thinker, believing what Markah had taught (and he may not have been the first to teach this), felt he had in the name YHWH something of tremendous power. It was an all-pervading force, bonding creation with God. Thus God was one with all that he had made through his name. The Tetragrammaton meant everything that God *is*, *was* and *shall be*, hence the Arabic rendering 'eternal'.

¹ Ex. 14.21.

To supplicate God by using his own name, not one that humans had given him, was to present a prayer with great power, so that the transcendent God could be reached. The name bonded the supplicant to God in the nature of things, and so he could feel a great measure of confidence in his approach to the Most High. The only drawback to success that there could be was the failure of the supplicant to present himself as a pure and righteous being. He could be completely and consciously bonded with God only if he comprehended his innate light, for that light was *of* God and therefore the higher the conscious awareness of that light the more directly bonded was that supplicant to the eternal, transcendent one.

Thus the transcendent God could be reached in idealistic terms, but it is perhaps a characteristic of religion not found in other disciplines that idealism is not lost through failure to achieve it. The Samaritan petitioner, like his fellow Judaist, Christian or Muslim, could only try to achieve that state. The appeal to the merit of the righteous would, he thought, make up to some extent for his own unworthiness. In any case, he could appeal to God *through his name*, thus receiving help towards gaining power from the divine power. On this we shall have more to say in the study of man.

One final remark about the name of God, which links with what has already been said about the Samaritan avoidance of trinitarian concepts, is that Markah's explanation of the name YHWH removes any possibility of essential manifestation or emanation of God.¹ The very name implies that he is one and that he himself in his being is effective in all worlds, in all situations, for whatever purpose. Thus the scheme of salvation is centred on the revelation of the name of God to his people through the 'man of God'. No other saviour could be conceived; only Moses had been capable of receiving the name. Possession of that name was enough. Man could now respond to and express the deity in full. That he failed to do so necessitated the soteriological scheme through Moses.

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

The Samaritans do not hesitate to assert that God is everywhere, but they nearly always qualify the assertion. The motive underlying this almost inevitable qualification is undoubtedly the desire to avoid

¹ As found in the early context of Israelite religion, where the name was pronounced once a year by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement.

the charge of pantheism. Pantheism in the usually understood sense has no place in Samaritanism with its belief in the ever-active God. Present he may be everywhere, all-pervading he may be, but an inactive force never!

Amram Darah and Markah between them set the pattern for the formulation of belief about the immanence of God. Amram Darah puts the matter simply:

Wherever a man turns his face, there he finds thee (C. p. 28.14).

From a different point of view Markah writes:

The eyes of the Lord your God are upon them from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (Memar IV.9).

Something of the all-pervading influence of God is set forth by Markah in the Defter:

O thou who possessest the heavenly dwelling, whose divine state preceded all, thy truth fills the world and thy goodness in even greater measure¹ (C. p. 17.20).

It is typical of Markah that he conjoins two concepts of God that may not appear at first sight to be mutual. By 'thy truth' he probably means 'thy true revelation', the Law, but sometimes he calls God 'the True One' or 'the Truth' and so here he may mean 'thy true state'. God fills the world with himself, albeit in another sense he is transcendent, the highest expression of him being his 'ownership' of the highest part of creation. By possession and ownership is meant that what God created is his own; it is *of* him and it shares the nature of his being. Thus the world is *in essence* perfect, but man, a lower manifestation of being, cannot realize it. Nevertheless the world for all its apparent failings is perfect in essence. It is filled with the being of God, *of* whom it came and is. God is always involved in his creation; it is one with him. So 'his truth', 'the truth of him' is one with him, just as in Johannine terms the Logos was *with* God and thus *was* God.

Great emphasis is placed on the notion of God's nearness, the nearness being but a figurative term in three-dimensional language. The Samaritans were aware that God is not really far or near, but that man's comprehension of him may be less or more. The more it is the nearer God is in his experience. The whole Samaritan belief about the immanent God is that God is near in so far as man is near

¹ So Markah can say, 'Thy divine *power* fills the upper and lower worlds (C. p. 17.7).

to him. At the philosophical level this is expressed by the belief in the light that indwells. The man in whom the light shines brightly has gone far toward the comprehension of God; the man whose light is dim is a long way from that state. The Johannine conception of the light comes at once to our minds, and we can feel sure that as the various Gnostic systems had much to say about the light and as the Qumran people at the Dead Sea saw a cataclysmic battle between light and darkness in Zoroastrianism terms, the whole of the Near and much of the Middle East was permeated with this or closely similar ideology.

A good example of the (qualified) statement about the immanent God is found in Amram Darah's Defer passage:

Nearest of the near, *who is not seen* (C. p. 30.19).

A common statement of the position is as follows:

Happy he who draws close to thee, O far one who art near! Woe to him who is distant from thee, O near one who art far (C. p. 30.7).

An understanding of the Samaritan view on the philosophical side reveals that there is more depth to that statement than may appear at first glance. In what sense is God 'near' to men or men to God?

'O thou who art near to human heart' (C. p. 79.8). The meaning of 'heart' is not specified, but it is always akin to that found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. That is, the word (often to be translated 'mind') is used in its Semitic sense rather than in the Greek. It is an inward experience; man experiences God, i.e. is near to him. In that state he is near to *expressing* God, because the innate light is radiating at a level or vibration far less than that of the pure light, but far more than that of the lowest manifestation of the pure light in the animal world. The relationship between sincere men and eternally true God is such that no barrier can come between the two.

Before thy holiness we proclaim, O Most High God, 'Thou art near to those who worship thee, though thou art not seen by them' (C. p. 18.19).

There is a more mystical belief about the immanent and omnipresent God which Markah and a few later thinkers taught. Markah is setting out his exposition of the cosmic salvation of Israel and speaks of the activity of God in the invisible world. He describes the entry of Moses and Aaron into Egypt to begin the cosmic battle (which still goes on between enlightened and unenlightened men) on behalf of the will of God in the following manner:

They entered Egypt without being unduly expectant about anything, but the Good One was with them in the unseen, invisible (Memar I.4).

Markah does not specify what he meant by God being with them in the unseen, but elsewhere he implies that the celestial forces or hosts of heaven are ever with the people of God in the pursuance of God's plan of salvation. Markah would no doubt have given assent to the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews (12.1), 'With all these witnesses to faith around us like a cloud', but there would have been a difference perhaps between Markah and the writer of the Epistle in terms of the beings involved.

There is the question about the holy mountain and the claims made for it. In the early days of Samaritanism, i.e. the early religion of Northern Israel, the holy mountain, Mount Gerizim, was held to be 'the chosen place, Beth El (the House of God)', on which the presence (Shekhinah) of God abode. The Samaritans still use this ancient terminology and still speak of the divine presence on Mount Gerizim. This may seem a complete contradiction to what we have shown the Samaritan conception of the immanent God to be, but we shall see what the explanation is when we examine the nature of the ideal world and the after-life, for this involves the idea that Mount Gerizim was the centre of theocratic rule and government of the pure world to be. Whether this is conceived in physical or spiritual terms remains to be seen when we examine the matter more closely in Chapters XIX-XXI. At this point we must be satisfied to note that the many references to the presence of God on the holy mountain have their origin in the early pre-philosophy days of the religion and have meaning in mediaeval and modern Samaritanism in terms of the ideal world.

We can, however, speak here of the Shekhinah of God in connection with immanence, leaving the matter of the holy mountain for later study. The idea of God's fullness encompassing and permeating the universe at every level is often spoken of by Samaritan writers, though they do not seem to have concerned themselves overmuch with expounding the theme or setting forth analogies. Judaism, on the contrary, has many such analogies.

God fills the universe as the soul the body,¹

which is hardly the same thing as Rabbi Levi's famous analogy:²

The tabernacle is like a cave that adjoined the sea. The sea came rush-

¹ Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, 10a.

² See Moore, *Judaism* I, p. 370.

ing in and flooded the cave; the cave was filled, but the sea was not in the least diminished. So the tabernacle was filled with the radiance of the divine presence, but the world lost nothing of that presence.

The stress on the divine presence abiding on Mount Gerizim merely emphasized the Samaritan conception of divine immanence. The Talmud¹ states that 'the Shekhinah is everywhere' and we read from Midrash Exodus Rabba 2.9 that 'there is no place without the Shekhinah'. The Samaritans interpret the Shekhinah in a way different from that of the Talmudists. When the former say that the divine presence dwells on Mount Gerizim, their minds do not conceive of the presence being *everywhere*. The Samaritan position everywhere is that the divine presence *in the era of divine favour* rests in a special way on Mount Gerizim. This is undoubtedly a polemical notion to counter the Judaist claims for Mount Zion. The important Judaist work called the Zohar has it that the word Shekhinah 'signifies the special manifestation of God in the lives of individuals or communities as well as in hallowed spots and places', and asserts that as the harmony in creation has given place to discord, the Shekhinah is said to be *in absentia*.² The Samaritan writers would agree with these statements, for they believed that it was the absence of the divine presence that caused the era of divine disfavour.³

Some Samaritan writers following the religious stream of tradition, as distinct from the religio-philosophical, may have in Defter times accepted a belief akin to that of the Zohar, but in this book we have to take into account the full picture as presented by the most representative authorities throughout the historical period of literary and liturgical composition. The scheme outlined in this book takes the whole period into account and the conclusion reached is that the Samaritan sense of the immanence of God did not include such notions as those found generally in Judaism (and rather rarely in Samaritanism) about the divine Shekhinah. It is clear that in the Defter some writers follow the biblical tradition about the manifestation of God in a personalized way and write of his presence as being located or localized in certain circumstances, such a circumstance being the era of divine favour, when there would be a perfect theocracy in the world, but we have noted that it will be necessary to examine this more thoroughly in consideration of the ideal world to come.

¹ Babylonian Talmud, Baba Bathra 15a.

² Zohar, tenth Siphrah.

³ With regard only to the national environment, not the individual.

The fundamental element here underlying all Samaritan belief is that God is to be found wherever a righteous man seeks him. God is everywhere, ever-active, never localized, never confined in any way. If from the traditional, religious point of view some believed that God would manifest himself on Mount Gerizim in special circumstances, as he did on Mount Sinai, then it was the biblical picture, far more primitive, far less evolved, that was painted. The glory, the presence, could in the biblical concept manifest itself in the Temple, but even here we may justifiably ask how much poetic licence was allowed in ancient times. Did the ancient Samaritans really believe in the presence of God manifesting itself in their Temple on Mount Gerizim, or did they really mean that God's omnipresence could be perceived in supernormal mystical circumstances that are created during worship in the receptive mind of the saint?

Let us offer some conclusions about this subject of the transcendent and immanent God and observe the bridge that the Samaritan built across the span between the two. The philosopher needed to construct no bridge, but the religionist did.

First a Defter statement involving the corporate concept of revelation:

Thy glory is withheld neither from the righteous nor from sinners throughout the generations, from Adam up to the present time, right on to the Day of Vengeance (C. p. 13.18f.).

God's transcendent state, his glory in other words, is never withheld from any individual. Man may place a barrier between himself and God, but God never by any deliberate act places a barrier between himself and man, good or evil. This is true of all periods of time, whether of divine favour or divine disfavour.

In thy greatness (transcendence) thou art hidden from those who can observe, but in deeds performed thou art revealed to minds (C. p. 492.6-7).

This is a clear assertion that the transcendent manifestation of God is beyond human vision, but the ever-active God is manifest in the human mind. This would suggest that the statements made about the presence of God on Mount Gerizim must not be taken too literally.

Happy the worshipper who acts sincerely toward thee in complete trust . . . for thou art with him in every place, close to him as it pleasest thee to be, guarding him day and night, so that he sleeps without disturbance and is at rest, for thou art the watcher who never sleeps (Durran, C. p. 40.7f.).

The true worshipper, being what he is and has evolved to become, worships God 'in spirit and in truth' (cf. John 4.23); the relationship thus established is the fact that God is really being expressed in the life of that man. Perhaps we may best conclude the Samaritan conception of all this by saying,

God is transcendent. God in the world is immanent.

God is 'above and below', eternal and everlasting, owner of both worlds, transcendent and immanent. As far as the believing Samaritan is concerned, the petition of Ab Gelugah is the ordinary man's attitude to the immanent God:

My Lord, guard me in (my) coming and going, in (my) sleeping and waking, and in times of darkness, wherever I go, and for always (C. p. 77.33-34).

3. THE PERSONAL NATURE OF GOD

The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.¹

We have now presented the Samaritan beliefs about the being of God. Something has to be said next about the nature of God in his personal manifestation. There is no real distinction between God's being and nature, of course, but for convenience we may say that the active manifestation of God's being in the world reveals his personal nature. The last section demonstrated the fact that for the Samaritan there could be tolerated no pantheistic or deistic notions. God's being and nature are one thing, or rather one state. The Tetragrammaton reveals this to be so, for HE WAS in manifestation and HE IS in state. The human being can only contemplate God's being, but he can see God's active self-revelation in the world. Does not creation testify that he is and is active? So the Samaritan thinker often argues. It is frequently assumed on the basis of simple perception of creation, but the mystical approach to God demonstrates far more, as we have seen.

God in the world, God as experienced by man, God manifesting his being in different human situations—all this is God in action. What are the characteristics of his activity seen by man? Little advance has been possible beyond the concepts already attained in the Pentateuch. There was no change of situation that necessitated a new vision of God. Had not Israel rejoiced and had not Israel

¹ Ex. 34.6.

suffered in the times of the Patriarchs? So Israel continued to rejoice and suffer under the rule of Persians, Romans, Arabs and others.

We shall not attempt to repeat what has been said in many books about the ethical nature of God, or to categorize the personal attributes listed in studies of the theology of the Old Testament, and especially of the Pentateuch. What we must do in order to portray the Samaritans' distinctive emphases in this field is to set out with quotations those glimpses of God that seem to have meant most to the Samaritan man of faith.

Out of the many glimpses of God man has, there is one that stands out supremely. This is the mercy of God. The Samaritan idea of mercy is that of something active, protecting, that is granted to men when they are in the right state of preparedness to receive it. It would be a fair assessment of the Samaritan view to say that mercy is love in action; a force of God's being is involved. God's love in a total way may be regarded as that manifestation of God that only the righteous can grasp. In its several manifestations of mercy, patience, generosity, condescension, goodness, grace, and so on, it is the repentant sinner (who by his penitent state has begun to be righteous) who experiences it. In its totality it can be comprehended only by those who have a great measure of wisdom and insight.

The title 'merciful one' is often found in a list of other attributes such as 'powerful one', 'mighty one', as if to say that mercy is an active, positive and dynamic force. This indeed it is as far as the supplicating Samaritan is concerned. It is no mere benevolent and favourable smile from the transcendent deity that is in his mind and desire. It is something that descends, as it were, on to the people of God or the individual and protects them from harm. The appeal to God's mercy in the face of persecution is the most potent and cogent the Samaritan offers:

Merciful one is thy name! Show mercy upon us. Let thy mercy protect us, the children of those who have loved thee (C. p. 17.21).

The results of the creative process might well have been considered enough. If God had done no more than create what is in the universe, he would have been the object of wonder and admiration, but the Samaritan sees in his mercy the very epitome of what he is and does. Ab Gelugah well expresses the view of God's mercy:

O I AM THAT I AM, the waves of thy mercy flow abundantly for all and the lights of thy salvation shine into oppression's darkness (C. p. 75.27-28).

Especially in connection with the salvation wrought on Israel's behalf we find the mercy of God being extolled and exalted over and over again. Creator and merciful one are two attributes of complete power, both beyond the reach of man's comprehension. God's love is considered almost always in the most active of senses. It is always doing something, though it does not always come with the sense of power that mercy does. Here are some of the distinctively Samaritan views of the love of God as expressed by Markah:

He gives relief to those who love him and he remembers them (Memar III.5).

He is near to all who seek him and cares for all who love him, a strong shield to those who believe in him, for he is merciful and full of pity (Memar IV.2).

Blessed is our Lord, who magnifies his beloved and cares for them in all their activity (Memar IV.4).

These quotations have one thing in common, and it represents the fundamental element in the concept of the love of God. No human can receive or experience the love of God unless he himself loves God, and so the Pentateuchal teaching. The covenantal requirement, in its moral and spiritual sense, requires that the relationship between God and man should be mutual and always reciprocal; but God does not always demand of men the full requirements of the covenant, for as often as not man is unable to do his part. What is absolutely necessary for the success of the covenantal relationship is the performance of the minimum on the human side.

Many are they that sin against thee, but with a little thou art satisfied. The worshipper who is sincere toward thee—nothing can befall him! (C. p. 21.9-10).

God is undemanding, relatively speaking. The Samaritan liturgist and poet, as well as the mystic, gazes in awe at the image of the God of love that he is capable of visualizing or perceiving.

The requirement on the human side is clearly brought out in the next quotation from Markah's Memar:

God does not like the evildoer and will not have pity for such, but he loves the good who hear his voice and keep his commandments, for he is merciful and pitiful, forgiving *all who seek him sincerely* (IV.5).

This is clearly biblical-style expression, but the idea of non-acceptance of the evildoer was subjected to modification after biblical times. God can love those who are capable of receiving his love, i.e. those who respond to the pure light within and therefore 'know' God and experience him. Love is therefore not received as though it were

something that God could issue forth to certain individuals. It is always there and is only 'realized', grasped by the conscious spiritual faculty, when man's state is sufficiently pure.

The full extent of the doctrine of the love of God did not have to await mediaeval formulations. Markah is quite positive at times that God 'loves' *all* men, which is a religious terminology for the (more natural to Markah) philosophical concept that a man who is loved by God is a man who is *of* God. Modern theology includes what was theology-and-philosophy to the Samaritan, but for the Samaritan there was a considerable difference between the traditional, Pentateuch-based concepts and the laic preference for the metaphysical and philosophical positive thinking, with its many analogies and deductive proofs. The Samaritan, after Markah, saw that the lover of God did not acquire his love, nor was it given as some sort of gift; he was impregnated with it when he developed the capacity for the manifestation of the inner light. As in the oft-quoted child's deduction from pictures of saints in stained-glass windows with the sunlight shining through the picture to the observer, 'A saint is one who lets the light shine through him.' A man who is divinely loved is therefore a man who is alight, and alight with the love of God, which in the Samaritan system is the same as the love *for* God.

When Markah says, 'God will not reject anyone who makes petition' (Memar III.7), he is not speaking of God's love as indiscriminately bestowed. He is really saying in religious terms that anyone who is capable of approaching God in the right way, i.e. responding to God, must be in a state of receptivity, which means receiving the mercy of God. Such a man may speak of the *love* of God, but when he knows his petition has been answered he acknowledges the *mercy* of God, for love at the divine level is beyond his grasp, while love in the human situation is felt as a force of comfort, of assurance, of protection, of rich promise.

There are two great forces that may be felt by man which are manifestations of God in the world. These are wrath and mercy. 'Turning to God', a favourite phrase of all sects whose teachings derive from the Pentateuch, is a religious way of saying, 'Make your life Godward', which in Markah's philosophy would be expressed as 'Respond to the light within you, and it will develop until it is one with *the light*.'

Flee to him, for before you is the way to salvation, and you will find him, for the Lord your God is a compassionate God (C. p. 493.5).

Man's comprehension of God must always be limited, and when Amram Darah says, 'Flee to God', he is thinking of the seeking of mercy, the need for spiritual protection. So other writers, Samaritan, Karaite, Muslim, often say:

Flee from God to God.

Thus man in his restricted realization flees from the wrath to the mercy of God. This figure reveals the state of man's failure to comprehend the essential nature of God. That essential nature is love. Love involves compassion and care (stative and active concepts of the one thing), but it always reveals discipline, too.¹ Men know that they are deserving of discipline; what they do not know is that they should be worthy at all times of love. Men who are good at all times seek the love of God, the love *for* God; those who are sometimes good, sometimes bad, seek his mercy and flee his wrath.

The doctrine of the love of God involves also the question of recompense. The Samaritans have perhaps more to say about this than most other religions, and we shall have occasion to examine their belief in the chapter on the Day of Judgement. What is the nature of recompense in view of what has been said about God's love?

Thou seekest the penitent, thou givest them the world.

This is the thought of the Beatitude (Matt. 5.3). Those who are humble in attitude are those who automatically have their reward. In religious terms Abisha thinks of the living God as rewarding those who 'partake of him', which Markah would express as 'those who have the light'.

The reward for humbly seeking God is the finding of his compassion.

Our God is near to those who supplicate him. Blessed, happy the man who turns from his sin! Flee you from your sin to the refuge of the fear of him, and thence seek the Lord your God and you will find him.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger. . . . Flee to him, for before you is the way to salvation, and you will find him, for the Lord your God is a compassionate God (C. p. 493.1-4).

God is often spoken of as 'gentle' in his dealings with men. This gentleness involves infinite patience, and the Samaritan stress on it is based on Ex. 34.6.

The Lord observes and he has patience. He always pities and is long-suffering. He is only patient perchance there may be a remnant who

¹ As in the thought of the Book of Hosea.

will magnify the True One with regard to what he has commanded (Memar IV.8).

Markah seems to be thinking of God's longsuffering patience as a quite distinctive aspect of his dealings with Israel. If Israel were to receive what it deserved, it would have been made an end of long ago. This idea reflects the view, expressed elsewhere, that the scheme of salvation is cosmic and not limited in any way to temporal considerations. In the passage last quoted Markah is speaking in terms of the biblical injunctions, but we cannot take the passage altogether in isolation. That God's patience is rewarded when a 'remnant' of the righteous magnify him reflects the older, biblical view so often expressed by the prophets of the Old Testament, but in other passages he maintains the cosmic view that in the end all men will become, or at least are capable of becoming, men of God. But what is meant by 'in the end'? The time of the Day of Judgement is meant, but there is a post-Judgement epoch, the time when cosmic salvation will take on its full meaning. Within the immediate context of the world, and the place of Israel in the world, there will be only a remnant of those who turn to God. This is not the same 'remnant' idea familiar from the Old Testament prophets, for the Samaritan teachers do not lay it down that those who remain true to the end must be elect Samaritans from birth. There is a much more general reference here.

A sense of acute wonderment is experienced that God should stoop to human level at all. This is the religious man's awe at the contemplation of the transcendent God. The same man at other times would turn to God thinking in terms of his immanent being. So Abul Hasan in the eleventh century thinks of the transcendence of God, and his ready acceptance of men's praises. He must have asked, as men have asked throughout the ages, how the God of glory, Lord of the universe, could have stooped to consider the affairs of puny men.

We praise thee with all our might; we exalt thee with all our power. Who can glorify thee according as thou art, thou who hast ever condescended to accept our praise from us, despite the weakness of our understanding? (C. p. 71.25-26).

Men cannot always be thinking philosophically; if they were, they would not use such language. In times of stress, of tragedy, of emotional strain, whether of joy or sadness, rapture or despair, the traditional language of religion is usually the first to spring to the mind.

So we must not judge Abul Hasan's words to reflect a primitive view of God.

'Good one' is a fairly common title for God in the writings of Markah. The goodness of God is an absolute concept, akin to his purity. The two are often linked. In contemplating the wonder of the universe, the Samaritan, as we have noted, gleaned his knowledge of God's being. Being filled also with a sense of wonder at the merciful love of God, he perceived not only order in the universe, but goodness as well.

Thy goodness fills the whole world. Thine acts of goodness are continuously re-enacted, for thou art good and doest good unceasingly and dost endure for ever in all thy good actions (Abul Hasan, C. p. 71.15-16).

The emphasis on the continuous evolution of the universe is matched in Samaritan thought of most periods by the stress on the continuously re-enacted love of God in the human situation. Markah was ever fond of listing the redemptive acts of God and drawing his conclusions from them. One of these conclusions is that God is not only good in his essential *being*; he is ever manifesting his pure and good *state* to human perception in his active revelation of himself. Some idea of Markah's thoughts on the goodness in the world, part of the created cosmos, is provided by the following quotation from the Defter already cited:

O thou who possessest the heavenly habitation, whose divine state preceded all (*the transcendent God*), thy truth fills the world and thy goodness in even greater measure (*the immanent God*) (C. p. 17.20).

Limitations of language are responsible for the translation 'in even greater measure'. To the Samaritan thinker, nothing *of* God is quantitative, another possible reason for the strict avoidance of dualistic or trinitarian concepts. Most Samaritans disliked speaking of God's spirit, because it was a concept that tended to be expressed in a quantitative way. Goodness is an absolute term, subject neither to qualitative or quantitative modifications. Thus God's goodness cannot be said to 'fill' only Israelite territory; it is a permeating, cosmic force restricted in no way except by man's propensity to fail to comprehend it.

Some indication has been given of the chief characteristics of God's active being as perceived by human mind. It must be said in conclusion that the Samaritans were ever determined to avoid mention of any one attribute or characteristic of God. His being and

nature is one essential thing. In order to demonstrate this truth, resort was often had to a commingling of the humanly conceived attributes. Abdallah (C. p. 213) combines the threefold manifestations of the active God as Creator, Judge and Saviour. Into these three concepts of God can be fitted the other attributes. God's manifestations, in Abdallah's theology, are all contained in creation, judgement and salvation. Indeed, the attributes of God most stressed in the Samaritan religion are those depicting his activity in the world and among men. This activity was not restricted in its application, for it covered every aspect of life from birth to death. Ben Manir often reveals this truth, when he speaks of God's concern for Israel and the individual alike. The well-being of Israel as a corporate body, elect and subject to purification through self-discipline and judgement (divine discipline), is never confined to any one period of time, to any particular generation of Israel. From Abraham right through to Joshua and the generations that were to live and do now live in the promised land, God's plans, preconceived and inevitable, were and are being worked out. God's concern was not only set in political terms; it was set even more in terms of physical and spiritual well-being.

May he open for you the door of prosperity. May he heal your wickedness.

Repentance for Abisha is health, whether national or individual. The right response to God, wrought by the working out of the physical and spiritual life in the world, meant that the soul radiated the pure light. The Deuteronomic teaching found a firm place in later Samaritan teaching, in that the correct performance of God's requirements Godwards and manwards created a situation of oneness with God. It was in that situation that God's love as seen in mercy was manifested in and manifest to the national body. In the development of the Deuteronomic teaching throughout the later centuries the spiritual welfare of the individual came to be equally important with the national. The attributes of God came to be a matter of individual interest and a subject for the individual's contemplation and understanding. The ability to perceive God in all his revelations, i.e. the degree of inspirational capacity, made a man advanced or retarded in his spiritual growth. Those who failed to develop the innate powers they possessed, chiefly by the sin of wanton rebellion against God's demands, became the subjects of God's wrath.

One more emphasized attribute of God remains to be considered

before turning to the subject of God and Creation, and that is God as Judge. We shall consider this briefly and later examine it more closely in connection with the beliefs about the Day of Vengeance and Recompense in Chapter XVIII.

To thy lovingkindness we flee, O our God, from thy wrath (Amram Darah, C. p. 493.32).

4 · GOD AS JUDGE

Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.¹

In their doctrine of the Day of Vengeance and Recompense, the last tenet of the creed, the Samaritans follow a quite distinctive line of their own, but that line of approach shows the influence of the several ideologies current in the early centuries (third BC to fourth AD). The Samaritan view of divine judgement is hardly that of the Old Testament or of Judaism, as we shall see.

Based chiefly on Deut. 32.19f., the attribute of 'judge' is never lost sight of, but it is not stressed to anything like the extent that God's mercy is. The idea of men queueing up before the wrathful deity did not appeal to the Samaritan mind, and Islamic concepts of this sort did not have the impact on Samaritanism that might have been expected. It is to be admitted, however, at once that the Samaritan poet did not hesitate to employ 'old-fashioned' religious terminology to stress his point or give his painting vivid colours. From biblical times right through to the world of Islam, Samaritans heard on every hand of the awesome and terrible scenes that were to take place on the Day of Judgement, and the greatest evidence of the impact made on them was no more than a re-thinking of Deut. 32, the greatest single monument to eschatological teaching in the Law, according to the Samaritan exegete.

It is significant, too, that the Samaritans do not stress overmuch a day of judgement as such. There is a decided preference for the idea of a day of *recompense*, when God's laws would be vindicated and all men would receive what they could rarely receive in the mundane plane of being, their *rightful* reward. Markah's teaching in the field of ethics we shall examine at the appropriate time and place. Here we note that he took the view, speaking as a religio-philosopher, that if a man expressed his innate powers for choosing the right rather than

¹ Ex. 32.12, the epitome of intercession to the Samaritans.

the wrong, he had his reward in the result. The more such decisions of choice took place in his life, the more he fitted himself for the exalted, blissful state of being that would follow the present existence in the three-dimensional state. Judgement and reward were in a sense hardly philosophical terms for Markah. They had their place in the traditional, religious terminology, a terminology that had its place in the corporate activity, in the national sphere. For everyman, the man in the street or market-place, he had the chance to prepare himself well enough for the bliss to come, but the average man had little chance of achieving this state for a variety of reasons, the chief of which, a summary of the whole, was his inability to radiate the inner light which was of the true light of God. As long as men failed to rise to the spiritual heights, it was necessary for God to make direct, personal appeals to them in history, and to send them his messengers and finally his Man Moses. Thus the whole scheme of salvation as demonstrated in history was the necessary corollary of human failure to comprehend and respond to God, to grasp the will of God, to realize his own nature—that it was in its pure and ultimate state the nature of God.

Within that context judgement found its inevitable place, for men who failed to express God in the world had to experience the reality and significance of their failure. Judgement, as seen through oriental eyes, was inevitable that right be done and that God's will be executed.

So we read in the Deftar in religious phraseology:

God is true and consistent, Judge of all the earth (Markah, C. p. 26.3).

It is to be noted that Markah at once qualifies the statement of God's attribute of Judge in the global context. All men are subject to the divine Judge, but that Judge is fair. There is no arbitrary dealing on his part. So Markah expresses himself more fully in the Memar, where he points to the biblical statement of Deut. 1.17 which involves human judgements. What is beyond human judgement (what is 'too hard to bear') is to be set before God. Markah teaches that the words of Gen. 2.17, 'You shall surely die', involve no unfairness, not even a punitive measure. The consequence on Adam and Eve is not really a punishment, for the consequence is implicit in the very transgression. Anyone capable of such action is clearly mortal by nature, in the spiritual sense. Here we have a teaching closely akin to the Pauline notion of spiritual death.

The Samaritans could never go so far as the Judaist Rabbi Eliezer ben Jose ha-Gelili (second century AD) who postulated:

If nine hundred and ninety nine angels gave a bad account of a man, and only one a favourable account, God inclines the balance to the meritorious side.¹

To the Samaritan this would be the attitude of a capricious God, lacking in constancy. God for him has established immutable laws of justice in his love and care for men, laws that reveal the antecedence of mercy, laws that demonstrate the immutable nature of God himself.

At the religious level there has been really little development out of the biblical standpoint. Much of the Deifter teaching gives the impression that God is Judge of all the earth and punishes sin and rewards good. Perhaps we could expect little more in a liturgy, but the true teaching of Samaritanism in its Roman and mediaeval periods involves the thoughts we have already set forth. This teaching appears in its best expression in the Memar of Markah, where it is made plain that God is not to be thought of as inscrutable and arbitrary, not as human kings and lords can be. He placed order in the physical universe; so also did he in the life of man. Every cause produces an effect, an unchangeable law innate at any level of life. What is called sin must result in what is called punishment, just as what is held to be good is followed by what is thought to be reward.

After setting out a section in which he demonstrated the fact of the fairness and justness of divine judgement, Markah goes on:

Praised be the everlasting King who causes change, but is not himself changed, who judges the doers of evil and recompenses them (IV.4).

There is no talk of punishment, no room in the Samaritan system for the punitive act. It is recompense that follows action. Just as the hand that seizes the thorn will be hurt, so the mind that contravenes the laws of purity will become defiled, and the light within the mind will be dimmed, and something of that which makes the light more radiant has been lost.

Righteousness belongs to the Judge who shows no partiality, and who does not overlook an action, whether by praising its good or condemning its evil. The good are exalted, the evil debased (Memar IV.8).

On what is divine judgement based? Not on the comparative quantity of good acts and evil acts, as in Islam and in some Judaist and

¹ Quoted by Moore, *Judaism I*, p. 391.

Christian traditions. It is not based on the sum of merits or demerits achieved by the person in judgement. There is, after all, no objective judgement, as has been stated, but if on theological grounds we were to make a case for a judgement, it would be in the Samaritan ideology a matter of cause and effect. Certainly the Samaritan Israelite was obliged by covenantal demands to perform certain outward rites, but these were means towards purity, and since purity is an ultimate and necessary qualification for entry into bliss, the state of the pure life with God, the means have vital importance. The transgression of these could be punished in the human environment, as commanded in the Law, but such human action is punitive and does not necessarily lead to the victim's advantage, while the divine judgement is a purification in order that the transgressor may develop a right attitude and be the more prepared (a favourite Samaritan word) for the Day of Recompense.

The central feature of the doctrine of judgement is thus that the choice between expressing God and not expressing God, between obedience to his way and transgression of it, or simply between good and evil, is man's. This was the biblical teaching. Developed along lines parallel to the Pelagian position, the doctrine becomes a part of the order set out in the universe by the wisdom of God.

In any case, the carrying out of one's side of a bargain or covenant is an ethical duty. Failure to do so is a sin and the consequences are fixed by the order of God's laws. Thus there is no struggle in the Samaritan faith between flesh and spirit; there is no constant battle between humanity and God. There is no Gnostic-style condemnation of matter as evil, and no stress on the weakness of the flesh as the cause of spiritual defect as in the writings of St Paul. Human weakness is taken into account only where necessary and no issue is made of it. Whatever may be the reason for human frailty in moral and spiritual things, the mercy of God is always there as a guardian and protector for man, not, however, for transgressing man, for he would not recognize the mercy of God if he were the recipient of it (which he would not be!). Only the man who 'fits in' with the scheme of things is prepared for the receiving of such blessed experience. Appeal to one's good acts of the past (in Pharisaic style) or appeal to the merits of the forefathers cannot win a man forgiveness. God's judgement consists of a natural law which, if broken, can only bring consequences that are direly inevitable.

It can be seen, then, that the Samaritan went his own way in his

idea of the nature of judgement, and while saying this we do not lose sight of the fact that his liturgies are full of Pentateuchal and Pentateuchal-type statements about punishment after the categories of Deut. 32. These statements are but the heritage of Israel's beliefs. What interests us here is the distinctively Samaritan development from Pentateuchal concepts and we have Markah more than any other to thank for these.

There is, despite the mediaeval imagery which we shall describe in connection with eschatology, no 'sheep and goats' teaching in normative Samaritanism. The Flood was the *outcome* of evil in the world and the saving of Noah was the consequence of his righteous life. In Markah's view the banishment of Cain and the slaying of Pharaoh represented pure justice in action. It is noteworthy (and entirely consistent) that the Samaritans could not accept the Judaist belief implied in the tradition that God lamented the severe sentence he had to pass on Adam for his disobedience. The tradition states that he moaned for six days before the Flood.¹ Such thought as underlies such traditions is entirely alien to the mind of the Samaritan as we find it expressed in his religious literature.

Even at the most traditional level the Samaritan supplicant ultimately appeals, not to his fathers' merit nor even to the loving-kindness (*hesed*) of God, but to his powerful mercy.

O beneficent one, of whose goodness the world is filled, forgive the transgression of my duty through wickedness, and enable me to dwell at thy hand and receive me. On the day of great judgement, my Lord, have compassion² on me . . . and pardon me. Recompense me not according to my wickedness, for thou art the Lord, merciful and gracious, God to all eternity (Markah, C. p. 85.12-15).

Here we have the last element in the doctrine of God's justice. The appeal to one's inability to respond to the goodness that fills the world and of which man has every occasion to partake, if he can but observe it, is the appeal of humble and contrite man. It could never be in Markah's eyes right for a man to step proudly before God, which is precisely what Pharaoh had done. The attainment of the pure state must involve the growth of the state of humility. The appeal to the Lord from the heart is an appeal to supreme love and must come from one who is conscious that he lacks purity and *needs* to achieve it.

¹ Tanhuma Bereshit, § 22, etc.

² The root of this verb is the root (*rahm*) of the favourite word for mercy.

There are passages in the Liturgy that stress the traditional biblical terminology to such an extent that one wonders where the evolution of Samaritan thought on the subject has disappeared to, but such passages almost all occur in festival or Sabbath contexts where there is no didactic element, and here we may expect the traditional terms to persist, even when their meaning is out of keeping with contemporary thinking. Christianity faces the problem of keeping up with contemporary advancements in theological ideas as well, and the rephrasing of the Prayer Book or other Book of Order is frequently being urged. The Samaritans no less were in a state of conflict as regards the position of their liturgical terminology, but they do not seem to have been seriously upset by the conflict. Additions were made from time to time to the Liturgy, e.g. in the ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, fourteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and much that was ancient was allowed to pass out of sight and use. In liturgical manuscripts we often read rubrics that tell of what was once the customary hymn or collect. In the same manner the various Judaist prayer books tell their tale of prayers and poems that have been dropped to make way for the preferred, more advanced ideas in new prayers and poems.

All this is stated to warn the student of the Samaritan Liturgy against too easy assumption of a false concept of Samaritan theology. The doctrine of God as Judge is perhaps the doctrine that most of all presents the problem of the retention of the traditional Israelite terminology and its commingling with the more advanced concepts of later times. We shall see further how the problem of divine judgement developed when we examine the belief in the Day of Judgement in Chapter XVIII.

O Thou who didst create those above and those below, deliver us from thy wrath, for thy lovingkindness outweighs it (C. p. 75.28).

IV

CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

*God is the origin of all that has beginning.*¹

THE SAMARITAN INTERPRETATION of creation is a well-developed one which has been worked out, as so often in Samaritan doctrine, on the basis of biblical warrant and developed along lines coextensive with it. It is important for our understanding of Samaritan thinking on any one topic to see that it is ever founded on biblical sanction and only then allowed to develop, under the influence undoubtedly of current ideologies, so that the doctrine formulated in the end is a cohesive and well-integrated whole. We shall observe that Gnostic and Christian concepts were assimilated during the development.

As is so often the case, the J account² is little emphasized, if at all, although the Samaritans from before the time of Ezra did possess the Pentateuch. It is P that supplies the basis of the fully developed doctrine of creation. The Samaritans in so many ways had a consummate sense of order. Their liturgies exhibit a sense of order, though hardly of proportion in terms of quantity, that is to be found in no other Near Eastern religion to the same high degree. Likewise in their theological and doctrinal organization they will not do with less than an ordered and planned statement of belief. The doctrine of creation must be studied within the context of a clearly developed scheme conceived in a cosmic way.

The P account of creation (Gen. 1-2.3) presents just that sort of order, and its carefully conceived statement of the subject was precisely that on which the Samaritans could build. We cannot enter here into the question whether P is a document from northern Israel and therefore with Samaritan Israelite affinities, but it is to be noted

¹ Abul Hasan, C. p. 79.25.

² Gen. 2.4b f.

that the only Hexateuchal document¹ that is manifestly southern in origin, namely J, is the one that the Samaritan thinkers had least concern for.

We shall not set out the P account here or discuss its connections with the earlier Babylonian and Phoenician cosmologies. This has been fully discussed in all substantial introductions to the Old Testament. Referring to the Priestly writer's aims in setting out the ordered statement that he does, Holzinger wrote:

It was his purpose to show that the theocracy which became historically realized in Israel as hierocracy was the end and aim of the creation of the world.²

The Samaritans would not have agreed with this estimate of Gen. 1-2.3, for their idea of the consummation of creation is expressed otherwise, as will be demonstrated below. The Samaritan interpretation of P's account is largely worked out along the lines of the later Gnostic and Neo-Platonic philosophies, without it being involved directly in the decisions of these systems. It rather perceived, even in an environment that presented ideologies somewhat removed from those underlying the biblical warrant, the full development of the P account in terms of knowledge, whether *gnosis* or by scientific observation.

The Priestly account has often been criticized as an impossible one. How, it is asked, could light be created before the creation of the source of light? There is no problem here for the Samaritan. Light is the beginning, but not light in its mere physical manifestation. We read in the Malef 5:

What did God create on the first day? On the first day God created the light, of which was the holy spirit which he caused to abide in the loins of the prophets and which he manifested in the image of our lord Moses in the invisible and visible worlds.

In many earlier passages 'holy spirit' is replaced by 'light', i.e. light of light, the supreme light. The reference to the indwelling of the 'spirit' in the prophets is really a reference to the pure light doctrine which we shall examine later. The Malef often expresses a point of view coloured possibly by Islamic thinking and we have to

¹ The term 'Hexateuchal' is used here because the Samaritan version of the Book of Joshua (in Chronicle II) shows the same northern affinities as E. The reference here is not to the late work of that title which is herein called Chronicle IV.

² Quoted in the article on 'Cosmogony', *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, Edinburgh, 1898, Vol. I, p. 501.

exercise caution in quoting from it. By the eighteenth century, probably a century after the composition of the *Malef*, the Samaritans of Nablus had begun to speak of 'a drop of light' entering into man as if in a quantitative way. This, of course, reflects the earlier Gnostic concept which Markah knew and rejected, but Islamic influence brought out some emphasis by various writers of the modern period on what is properly the 'Light of Muhammad legend' of Islam.¹

In contrast to the Gnostic concept of light as an emanation, the Samaritan view finds no room for the belief that the pre-creation light was an emanation from God. There are no emanations from God, not even emanations *of* God, because he is one, indivisible and not integrated from several strands of being or different forms of states of existence. The light, which according to P (Gen. 1.3) was created before any physical bodies were created, was *of* God rather than *from* him in the same way that the Logos was *of* God, but not separate from him. In other words, what is created is not and can never be separate from God, for it is *of* him. The pre-existent light is never to be regarded as separate from God in the way that wisdom was conceived to be apparently in Proverbs 8.

The Defter view is one that spans the totality in ultimate terms:

Thou art he by whom and of whom all things are, and to whom all things are subject (C. p. 28.8).

God himself is the source and the very being of what he created.² Now we see what the Samaritans teach about the light of God, for God *is* the light in ultimate terms, while Moses, we read, possessed the more limited role of 'light of the world'. In this doctrine we need take no account of early or mediaeval periods in any chronological sense as we have to do in many other chapters, as all periods present the same basic pattern of belief.

The light is conceived of in two ways, a mystical and a deductive. The former is not greatly developed, while the latter is worked out to the conclusion in the most practical of ways. In connection with the mystical approach, we read from Markah's *Memar* (VI.7) that there are seven gates within the ultimate gate of light. From the primordial gateway the pre-existent (in the sense of pre-creation) light issues forth—how we shall see below; as the light proceeds

¹ See further Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 228.

² Thus the unformed and unmanifested *tohu wa-bohu* (Gen. 1.2) could not be thought to have an existence before creation apart from God.

further and further from its source, although it is never independent of its source, it assumes different *degrees* of manifestation. The first stage is that whereby the darkness of chaos and uncreation is illumined with full radiant power. The second stage is that whereby the energy of the light manifests in fire (the first of the elements). From this the third stage is the physical one in which energy assumes its material form in the development of the sun out of nothing. The fourth stage provides that inner light which exists in the human image and brings about the glorious state of pure humanity. The fifth stage is that whereby the celestial light, not in the fiery state, appears and the stars received the power to illumine the cosmic scene. In all these stages the light is unending and retains its original state and order of being.¹

The sixth stage is conceived of as the degree or state of light from which the five derived their degree direct. Thus so far we have proceeded to light in its most material form, i.e. as manifested in the creation, ordinary light which penetrates darkness, light as energy which is the source of all energy, light as energy that brings life and vitality to inorganic matter, light that 'quickens' the human soul and gives a man a status above all other created things, and sixthly the source of manifested light from the ultimate light.

The seventh, which was *reserved* by God throughout the creative process, manifested itself in its highest form in Moses, Logos and Lawgiver. We must discuss this seventh state separately below in connection with Moses.

Markah's system is related to Gnostic concepts, but in the restricted sense that he weaves the different manifestations of light into one pure light.

When he brought light into being it was made manifest to the whole world. He ordered it in his greatness and the light of the sun was derived from it, and also that of the moon and all the stars (Memar VI.1).

The Scripture was produced during the creative process; it was made in the light (Memar VI.2).

The light that illumines, radiates, makes intelligent all who perceive (Ben Manir, C. p. 679.5).

The Mighty One who created heaven and earth . . . prepared a shining light out of darkness . . . That was the light from which the faithful, chosen prophet was constituted (C. p. 206.24-25).

¹ The order of extension is thus uncreation, the elements, the physical world, man, heaven.

Samaritan literature is permeated with such statements, all of which appear to derive from Markah's seven categories.

There is some uncertainty in the minds of several writers as to the pre-existent nature of the light. In what sense was it pre-existent? After all the Priestly account of creation states that God 'created' the light! If so, it could not have preceded creation, but must have been part of the whole cosmic process of creation out of nothing. Abdallah in his great hymn on the birth of Moses seems quite clear about this.

(The sun speaks): My light is subdued by his (Moses') light. Before me the light was prepared (reserved) for him (C. p. 749.17-18),

which reminds us of the New Testament statement of John the Baptist about Jesus (John 1.30).

It is natural that we should turn to Gnosticism in this connection, for in the Ophite system the supreme being was light. There was held to be an 'overflow' of light which fell like dew. Christ's purpose, according to this belief, was to descend and gather together all the dew of the light. The Samaritans could not share this belief, because they could not conceive of the light in every man as being constituted of millions of drops of light, a drop in each man. To them the light in every man was *of* the light of God, not something *from* it. The Samaritans may well have known the Ophite and other related Gnostic beliefs, for they speak frequently of Moses 'treading in the fire' and explain this in cosmic terms; the Gnostic background to this lies in the stress on the fire which he trod being 'as *dew* to his feet'.

In the Ophite system consummation is effected by God's saviour when all the dew (drops) of the light are gathered together and restored to the incorruptible Aeon. That this concept may have Stoic origins is a possibility that does not enter into our consideration here.

In the Gnostic system of Saturninus the 'spark of life' (or 'light containing life') comes from the heavenly Power after the creation of man from the physical elements by angels, and after death the 'spark of life' is returned to him. The Samaritans would subscribe partly to this thought, for the light within man, radiating his image, was held to be 'borrowed but for a time' and would, since it was indestructible, be returned to God, the source of it.

Another system of belief, found in the Coptic treatise called the Apocryphon of John, expresses the thought that the vital spark (of

light) brings illumination to the soul of man, so that he perceives spiritual truths. This thought, too, comes within the range of the Samaritan view, for it would connect closely with the fourth state of Markah's categories.

The Samaritans' more developed and ordered system of belief will be continued in connection with its manifestation in the life of Moses.

In Roman and mediaeval times alike there was a considerable amount of mystical speculation among the Samaritans. Something of that approach appears in places in the liturgies and in various independent compositions on mystical themes, mostly from the period following the fourteenth century. One aspect of this outlook is the envisaging of an ideal city which was in the beginning and will be after the Day of Judgement. The most direct reference to this is made by Markah, although he does not expand the thought.

In the beginning there was a city in which thy goodness abode. In the primordial silence thou didst sow words and creatures came forth. These are thy powers, the harvest of thine own wisdom, the visible in abundance and the invisible most choice (C. p. 16.29-30).

The reference to the primordial silence will be discussed later in this chapter and the reference to the visible and invisible will be dealt with in Chapters XIX and XX. It suffices here to state that the Samaritans have throughout their literature many hundreds of statements about the visible and invisible realms, over which Moses is eternally the lord and for which he is ever the 'spokesman' before God.

The city of God may have been conceived under the influence of Augustine,¹ but the Samaritan picture is tied up with the eternal Garden of Eden, which is the ideal state into which the righteous enter, in a quite distinctive way. It is clear that the earth as a physical creation exists coextensively with the 'eternal city', which the pious and saintly Samaritan may abide in, in his spiritual life, while still on earth.

We turn now to the *modus operandi* of creation itself, beginning with how God acted, as seen through Samaritan eyes.

Thomson rightly argued² that the Samaritans held to a more rigid doctrine of the creation than the Judaists. The chief element in

¹ Or it may have derived from the Revelation of St John. See also the picture of the Lamb on Mount Zion and the saints with the divine names written on their foreheads (Rev. 14.1; 21.2).

² *The Samaritans*, pp. 183-5.

this that distinguishes the Samaritan position is one that is known from Gnostic sources, namely the creation from an emanation of divine *will*, an element which never became an accepted part of Judaism's official (Rabbinic) teaching. Creation by an emanation of divine volition, however, could be misinterpreted if understood only in Gnostic guise. The Samaritans could not and did not conceive of emanations in connection with God. They rather contemplated the interplay of various parts of God's nature. What will decreed, wisdom ordered and planned, and power executed. This kind of teaching is typical of Samaritan thought throughout all periods. A comparison could be made for purposes of analogy with the Gnostic system of Basilides. Thus Markah's statement:

He *willed* a season for the light and a season for the darkness, each corresponding to order (Memar VI.1).

Once God has willed something and it is perfected, his power brings it forth. There is the question of what the Samaritans understood 'will' to mean. In one case, in the liturgy for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Abisha wrote:

When the Lord *sought* that the creation of the world should take place. The use of the Hebrew root *drš* is rather less familiar in this connection, for it expresses the idea that there is a need that has to be met, and God has no needs in the material or indeed any sense in the Samaritan view. The purpose of creation will be discussed shortly. Here it is enough to say that the root usually displays the presence of will, i.e. decision as distinct from want. In the system of the Gnostic Basilides (which negates everything that Samaritanism makes positive)

The non-existent God *wished* to make a cosmos.¹

Another aspect of the idea of 'seeking' is expressed by several mediæval writers, notably Ben Manir and Abdallah b. Solomon. This is that 'a creator is not like one at rest; he is as someone who is ever seeking' (C. p. 699). Judaist and Samaritan would agree that a god who seeks is at least a god who has a purpose, and purpose is all-important to both in order to ascertain the will of the deity and the explanation of the phenomenon of life and the world. We can see that Abisha and Abdallah are not averse to maintaining a teleological argument for the existence of God, while at the same time accepting as presupposed and axiomatic the existence of the Creator.

¹ Cf. R. M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, p. 143.

The wisdom of the Creator plays an important part in the creative process. Once his will has decreed (i.e. God has willed), order is brought out of the chaos of primary matter.

Thou hast brought about all thou willest out of the foresight of thy mind (Markah, C. p. 22.16).

His wisdom brought to pass everything in good order, wisdom in the fullness of knowledge, established in the power of the Eternal One (Eleazar b. Phinehas, C. p. 36.23-24).

The first appearance of the light, in another passage, comes 'by the ordinance of his wisdom' (C. p. 206), a statement that demonstrates well the fundamental Samaritan view that the decree of God's will is not to be regarded as something apart from or in any way other than the wisdom that directs the process, but in fact the decree (ordinance = the divine Word) is the decree of his wisdom, the latter being of the same essence as the will.

Elsewhere, instead of the second aspect of the creative process, wisdom, Markah states goodness to be an element in it.

By thy goodness the world came into being; by thy power it was set in order (C. p. 18.25).

Since everything that God made was good, God must himself be good, because what he created is of himself, just as the pure light and the celestial and terrestrial light are of the pure light of God. Power, in many passages, is the activating principle, bringing into being the ordered conception of the will, but in the passage just quoted the power was responsible for the setting in order. It is thus clear that the Samaritans avoided creating too rigid a system of creative attributes of God. We have here a more theologically flexible system than, e.g., the Brahman, where the threefold principle at work in creation is will, knowledge, action, corresponding to the Samaritan will, wisdom, power.

When the created thing is perfected by the will of the Creator out of the four elements, he brings them into being by his power (Memar VI.1).

The proof of God's existence from the evidence of creation, discussed elsewhere, is thus perceived in the Samaritan mind in logical terms. God's power activates the order manifested through mind from the decree of will.

The end of creation and its highest product is man. This is the consummation of all (C. p. 103). The purpose of creation is conceived in terms of man. Some clue to the deep, underlying motive of

creation is expressed by Abisha (C. p. 489) who, as has been stated above, asserted that a creator is not like one at rest, but rather as someone who is seeking. This is to say that God in his very nature is *expressing himself*. It is his nature to do so. One, alone, by himself, though he may be, yet he ever has the 'wish' to express himself in, through and for himself.

God made the world, according to the Dustan (C. pp. 70f.), for the righteous of the world, for they were such by nature that they expressed and thereby pleased God; not that they gave him pleasure in any human sense, but that they by their life manifested the perfection that is innate in all creation. Their being manifested God, was an expression of God, and their will was his will.

Two other expressions demonstrate the purpose for which God created the world:

The waters of the deep he held in check, the waters of the firmament he raised up; he made a space between them for those who love him to move about (C. p. 20.7).

Markah's interpretation here of the old cosmological concept of creation is a considerable advance on older understandings of God's purposes, poetry though his writing is. Everything is motivated, chaos under control, for the sake of those who, in the nature of the creative act and as a necessary part of the necessary creation, would respond to God by recognizing in him the ultimate goal and aim of human existence.

Thus Markah's

Thou didst set thy dominion in motion for the sake of those who love thee (C. p. 22.22).

And what is the ultimate state of creation? Eternal or temporal? There is no doubt whatsoever in the Samaritan mind that creation, like the Creator himself, is eternal. Since it is *of* God, sustained by the light of God, preserved by the unchanging order produced by the wisdom of God, it can never end. So there is no such thing as destruction, only change. Everything that 'dies' simply returns to its source, i.e. God. Markah puts it:

Moses taught the people that everything created would return to its original state (Memar IV.5).

He also teaches in the same work (IV.3) that creation and the Day of Vengeance are everlasting. Whether he meant that these are eternal as well as everlasting is of little account at this point in our

examination. The Semitic words (Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic) involved in the relevant literature do not distinguish adequately between 'unending time' and 'out of time'. There are some passages that seem to imply that there is no beginning and no ending to the works of God. As he has no beginning and no end,¹ so his will *ever* ceases to do this. The problem will be discussed further in studying the Garden of Eden concept, in which connection the Samaritans seem to have conceived of both a physical and a spiritual (heavenly) Paradise after death and the judgement. That writers should vary so much on their view of the Paradise possibly reflects the fact that the Samaritans never really differentiated between physical and spiritual in any real sense.² Creation is a two-world phenomenon. When we examine the two-world concept in connection with Moses, we shall see that one cannot be thought of in complete isolation from the other. Moses is the prophet of the two worlds; he inhabited both. Paradise, whether on earth or in heaven, is a blissful and pure state of being. The Samaritans do not appear to have concerned themselves over the question whether it was a place or a state. Their holy mountain was to be the centre of Paradise, but the mountain, too, is not always thought of and described in physical characteristics. Everything that God's mind conceived and his power brought to existence has its different states or levels of being, just as the Law (one of the products of creation, too) can be read through human eye or through contemplative and metaphysical perception. As eye and inward (soul) perception must in the perfect state of things be consubstantial, so the two worlds of being are consubstantial.

We have seen the general principle recognized by the Samaritans to underly the creative act. It is now necessary to follow their view of the actual processes involved.

As stated in the Pentateuch (Gen. 1.3), *God spoke and light came into being*. This Word of God, from which came the concept of the Logos (Word), the Memra (Word) of Judaism, 'went forth' from God, but, of course, there is no relation of this divine *fiat* with actual speech. Certainly the Samaritans did not think in such terms. What was issued from God was his decree, i.e. will.

¹ The Alpha and Omega concept is fairly prominent in the mediaeval writings.

² There being no belief, as in Gnosticism, in a lesser (hence potentially other than perfect) state of being in matter.

The Word everywhere is emphasized as power rather than reason, and in this the Samaritan position is closer to that of the Prologue of St John's Gospel than the Greek philosophies, but the later Neo-Platonic outlook provides a picture resembling the Samaritan rather than the Judaist Philo's view. The Neo-Platonic *Nous* is an actively intelligent power and this description would adequately describe the Samaritan concept. It is reason with power and not the abstract pure reason.¹

Another approach to the assessment of the nature of the Word comes out clearly from some remarks of Moore² in his description of the Judaist position:

The idea of a divine intermediary, whether derived from Philo or the independent product of a similar Platonizing theory of the nature of the deity, had some currency in Hellenistic Jewish circles; this may be inferred from the adoption and adaptation of it in certain New Testament writings (Hebrews, Colossians, the Gospel of John).

The Samaritan concept of the Word is not far removed from Philo's idea that the Logos was the daily bread from heaven, whereby man's spiritual life is fed,³ for Moses as men's inspiration is the Samaritan's Logos. We shall examine this further in regard to Moses the Word of God.

Whether the Samaritans were influenced by the Gnostic-Judaist or Johannine concept of the Word is not vital to our purpose here. As a matter of principle in studying the concepts of the Samaritans it is rather that they founded their (already accepted) beliefs on the base of a biblical warrant, in this case the statement of Gen. 1.3, and, under the influence of the current ideology of the Logos, expanded their partly formulated doctrine to its fullest extent within their doctrinal system. Thus the Memra of the Judaists, which was considered, like wisdom in Prov. 8, to be a separate entity, could not find a place in Samaritanism; there was no Pentateuchal support for it. But the Christian Johannine concept of the Word as an incarnation of God, with God—so John 1.1—was more akin to the scope of the Samaritan theology. There could be nothing separate from God or associated with him as a separate entity in anything that he did, and so there could be no Word as distinct from him. For the Samaritan thinker the Word has to be of God and not *sui generis*.

¹ See further the discussion of Moore, *Judaism* I, p. 416.

² *Ibid.*, p. 417.

³ Bouquet, *Sacred Books of the World*, p. 220.

Later we shall observe how the Word came to be identified with Moses in the cosmic scheme of creation and salvation, as he brought the pure light to men.

God created out of nothing. The biblical warrant for this in Samaritan eyes is the fact that 'In the beginning God created', but nothing is said in the Pentateuch about 'before the beginning', except the existence of 'waste and void' (the Samaritan's 'formless energy'). That God existed himself at or in the beginning when the creative process began was sure sign that he already was. God is therefore out of time, but only revealed himself in the time he created. God created creatures out of nothing by his command; this is a typical Samaritan presentation of the simple issue; He 'raised them up'. So he 'raised up' Moses for the beginning and the end (C. p. 84.27).

It appears that he 'raised the creatures up' out of 'bundles massed', according to Abdallah, following a system of belief not dissimilar from the Brahman:

All sorts of species were evolved in succession from bundles massed together (C. p. 324.9-10).

Thus the creative Word activated chaos, which is conceived of as unformed energy, so that it took the form of masses of energy or primary matter. By the wisdom of God, responding in eternally unchanging order to his will, these bundles took various forms, presenting the prototypes of those species that were to manifest themselves in the three-dimensional world and to reproduce thereafter their own species.

Early Samaritanism expresses many aspects of the belief in creation out of nothing, whereas Judaism until the Middle Ages had much less of speculation on the subject.

The question whether the world, the creation of which is described in Genesis, was brought into existence *de nihilo*, or whether the cosmos was formed from a chaos of previously existing formless matter, and in the latter case, whether this matter was created or eternal, did not excite discussion in the Palestinian schools, and there are few utterances that bear on it in any way.¹

The considerable Samaritan interest in the subject serves to show the indebtedness to Greek philosophies in the early centuries AD in Palestine.

¹ Moore, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 381.

An important element in the belief about pre-creation is the primordial silence (Mashtokah) which was before time, when all was void and chaos. It was in this silence that the Word issued forth. Whether the concept of primordial silence, a Gnostic idea, too, was derived from the fact that God 'spoke', there having been no previous 'sound', is difficult to say.

Out of the silence thou didst call into being the world and all it contains (C. p. 17.13-14).¹

Out of the primordial chaos, or as conceived by the Samaritans the primordial energy, and the cosmic stillness came the Word as decreed by divine will. It is not certain whether it was believed that matter existed in that form before the *fiat*. It would appear that the decree of God's will produced matter in an inchoate form (whatever this may mean) which his wisdom organized, preparatory to the production of things physical by his power. The uncertainty about the nature of the primordial stuff applies also in the case of earlier forms of Semitic religion. In the creation story of the Babylonians Marduk formed heaven and earth from the carcass of the slain Tiamat (biblical Tehom). Similar to that mythology is the Scandinavian myth of the world being formed from the flesh and bones of a giant, Ymir, by Odin.² As Thomson points out in that connection, even Philo, who had the biblical story of creation at his disposal, was obliged to presuppose primordial matter. Such a belief implied that matter existed before creation, and therefore sin, so often related to matter as a source of its origin, may have pre-existed; thus we are led to the dangerous position of stating in effect that sin pre-existed with the Creator, that it did not arise after creation because of man.

The Samaritans constantly and consistently assert that the world was made from nothing; so we must assume that the pre-existent stuff was not matter, certainly not in some materialized form of the primordial energy. This would mean that God 'worked on' energy and not matter, and so we would not face the same difficulties that, e.g., Philo did. The Samaritan position centred on *tohu wa-bohu* (without form and void) as the primordial stuff which God in his wisdom 'ordered' into a form. The form that it took was *a form from the form* of the Creator's wisdom; thus it was eternally ordered and

¹ Cf. Markah's variant statement (C. p. 16.29) that 'in the silence thou didst *sow* words and creatures arose'.

² See further Thomson, *The Samaritans*, p. 182.

organized into a form, though in its material manifestation it was not eternal. It was subject to change at any time by the will of God. Never is it said that once God's will has acted, what he has done or made must remain unalterable. After all, there is Pentateuchal warrant for the belief that God could 'change his intention', this warrant being the intercession by Moses on Israel's behalf, so often quoted as the supreme prayer.¹

This is where the Samaritan position differs from that of its sister religions. The emphasis is everywhere on the claim that only God himself, in his being, is unalterable. This did not mean that his will remained inactive after its creative decree. His will is that aspect of his self-manifestation that is completely and essentially beyond the comprehension of man. In a way similar to the Islamic position, the will of God remains ever inscrutable to man. Hence the Samaritan thinker never led himself to a position where he could say that what was created was eternal *in form*, although it was eternal in the sense that nothing willed by God can have its essential being destroyed. Eternal it must be, but not as matter. It may be from this position that the Samaritan uncertainty about the nature of the ideal world arises. Is it to be on a perfect earth or in some perfect state in other than the three-dimensional world? Some say one, some the other. Perhaps it is a tribute to the Samaritans that in this doctrine of the ideal world they did not tie themselves down to a concept not warranted clearly from the Pentateuch itself. As far as they are concerned, God was already there in the beginning and there was nothing else, i.e. nothing other than him (after Deut. 32.39). Light, the Word, were not emanations from him, nor were they created in the sense that they were given permanent physical form so as to become *sui generis*. No, these were *of himself* and never isolated or independent in their state. They were of his essence eternally and had no separate existence.

Markah demonstrates the belief that matter can never be called an origin, for it itself is the outcome of a process. He thinks rather, as we shall see below, of the energy that springs from the mass. It was the original state of the mass, i.e. of the primordial energy which has no form or substance, that produced the origins of the creative process. Matter as such must in the end return to its original state within the primordial stillness (Memar IV.5). This matter that is produced by the creative process from energy is the antithesis of

¹ Ex. 32.32, 14.

mind, a distinction that is maintained by the Samaritan thinkers throughout their history. Mind and matter are two ends of one state of manifested being, and the two degrees of light responsible for each are but two of the seven states of light.

The form that was first reached in terms of matter was that of the four elements, fire, water, air, earth, the four first mentioned by Empedocles (495-435 BC). As we shall see, God was able to manipulate these for purposes outside the purely creative. The elements are to be considered as subject to employment and re-employment even after creation.

The simplest expression of what God did with these elements once they were created is given by Markah:

The True One made the elements to develop, which are the foundations of creation (Memar VI.10).

Everything, including man, is derived from the four elements. We have noted the statement of Abdallah (C. p. 324) that all sorts of species were evolved out of bundles (of matter) massed together. We have no detailed information about how individual forms came into being from the primary stuff, but it is of significance that the Samaritans developed a concept of the *image* (*zalma*), which is, it appears, within everything. There is no description of the image in general terms which guides us as to what its function is, but judging from what is said about the image in man, it is the form for which the wisdom of God was responsible. That is to say, God *willed* creatures, his wisdom gave them form (order of being), and his power brought them to the state of animation. The place of the spirit of God in this is obscured because of the early Samaritan avoidance of the term. They recognize this since it is biblical, but they do not develop it to any extent (except from the time of the Malef), no doubt because of their anxiety, in their necessarily defensive position, to avoid either (a) the charge of believing in a duality and hence a Godhead, or (b) the charge of believing in emanations of God in the Gnostic sense. Thus in every way Samaritan thinkers succeeded more or less in overcoming the charge by such insistence in doctrinal terms on the absolute oneness, never unity, of God, that even emanations were anathema to them.

Abdallah's insistence (C. p. 324) that there were no pre-existent exemplars or models as prototypes for forms shows that Plato's teaching of universals and particulars was not attractive to the

Samaritan mind. It is through the *form* that the Samaritans explain the difference between created things. In the same way Abdallah demonstrated the differences between men, asserting that men were in different categories. He stresses that God placed men into different categories, even after the form (generic) of man was created, so that one speaks, another is dumb; one is an ordinary man, another a man of moment; one lives in darkness, another in light;

From of old the matter has been so and the world exists in this fashion.

In other words, Abdallah tells us that it is part of the nature of the created world that the form in man shows differing characteristics between one manifestation and another.

A detail within the general picture of earth's creation is supplied in an interesting passage from Markah's Memar, which reveals the acceptability in the Roman era of Greek philosophical teaching:

Some have said that our Lord derived earth's creation from the mass of the sun. Reply now to them, 'You have not missed the mark when you say this. You have spoken on the basis of knowledge.' Whence was the mass of the sun derived unless from the greater light and the fire (energy) from it? The radiation of energy covered it, for it is not possible for a mass to exist as distinct from the energy (VI.1).

He goes on to point out that such knowledge, i.e. empirical observation, leads to a greater realization of the might of the Creator. Thus Markah perceived that the more 'science' discovers about the universe, the more wonderful God becomes in man's eyes.

The last-quoted passage is an important one, although it is not entirely free of obscurity. There is no wider context within which Markah's statement can be judged. It is a more or less isolated statement, as so many of his are, in a context where the connection of thought is not very marked. That it reminds us of modern beliefs about the earth and sun need occasion no great surprise, as so many Greek concepts forestalled modern ones. The chief difference is that in the modern world the concepts have for the most part become actualities.

The locating of heaven and hell in the universe did not concern the Samaritans much. The Pentateuchal statements about Sheol and about heaven were simply accepted with little comment and no development of belief about them. There is, however, one point of agreement between Samaritanism and Judaism about heaven, and that is that it exists in seven levels (one Samaritan variant tradition

from the mediaeval era has it as nine). Whether these are related to Markah's seven categories of light or not is far from certain.

Judaism did develop many beliefs and legends about the various heavens, their location, their relation to each other, their denizens, but Samaritanism is almost entirely silent on such matters. It is probable that there are two reasons for this omission in the Samaritan cosmological scheme: (1) there is no clearly defined warrant; (2) the Greek philosophies did not involve themselves much in such considerations. In any case, as we show elsewhere in this book, Samaritanism did not borrow from Judaism and as far as belief about heaven and hell is concerned this truth is again manifested.

In general, heaven is the abode of God and the angels, in accordance with the Pentateuchal view. Even the belief about the after-life does not reveal any assimilation of Christian teaching about the redeemed abiding in God's own realm. Deut. 10.14 is about as far as the Samaritans were prepared to go.¹

Of especial interest for the student of Samaritan theology is the fact that a people who kept so strictly to the regulations of the Law were able, basing their doctrines on biblical warrant and expanding them as long as the original warrant was not gainsaid or corrupted, so harmoniously to combine biblical statements with philosophical concepts derived from non-biblical, indeed heathen, sources. This harmony of principles is perhaps the chief gem of Samaritanism. The biblical statement is interpreted in the light of what were to the Samaritans modern concepts. They were doctrine welders who constructed a lasting frame. Sixteen hundred years have elapsed since Markah's day and the Samaritans, albeit few in number now, continue to believe in and teach their children a religion which is an integrated amalgam of the Law and later religious evolution.

SPACE AND TIME

Throughout Samaritan literature we find references to the two-world concept in terms of 'above and below'. Sometimes this phrase means heaven and earth, the upper and lower worlds, but not always. There are times when the phrase occurs in conjunction with the expression 'the four corners of the world', and indeed Ben Manir actually refers to the 'six corners'.

God hears from the six corners (C. p. 678).

¹ For some views about the Judaist concepts see Moore, *Judaism I*, p. 368.

This unusual expression relates to the distinctively Samaritan view of the immanent God, but we may observe at this stage that the four directions (the Hebrews' 'behind, before, left and right' as they faced the East) are thus supplemented by the third dimension. In their anxiety to avoid localizing God, the Samaritans therefore spoke of him as active in history *from* and *in* all directions, within the three-dimensional world.

We have here a further illustration of the cosmic outlook of the Samaritans. The 'upper' world, the invisible, is constantly included with the 'lower', the visible, and in all sorts of ways space is spoken of as occupied by the cosmos, consisting of the two worlds inhabited by men, plus the stellar bodies, which are in turn intimately related to the two-world scheme of things.

The temporal scheme is distinctively Samaritan. Past, present and future do not seem to have been categories into which time was eternally divided. The Samaritans preferred to regard time in terms of the activity of God in the life of Israel. The past is not the past in any sense of development, for it is a period in which the state of the world is clearly defined. From Adam until the advent of Moses is the first division of time, and this is sometimes subdivided, as we have seen in the Introduction, into two eras, the first from Adam to Noah (the first dispensation) and the second from Noah to Moses, a period which included the all-important lives of the Patriarchs with whom God entered into covenantal relationship. The second of the three periods into which time is divided is the period from the passing of Moses till the end of the era of divine disfavour; this is the present period, due to end at the end of time, and it is believed that the New Kingdom will be inaugurated after the end of the sixth millennium. The third period, in the future, is to be the perfection of the world in divine favour. When Markah writes, 'What is past is past', he means that the period of disfavour, brought on by men's disobedience, is over, and that with a change of heart the new era could come. The future is no more than the fulfilment of all that has already been. Everything that has been and is has its realization, its consummation, in what is yet to be. God's will right from creation will be brought to pass, and everything will be manifested in its ultimate perfection. This is what the future means to the Samaritan. The world is fundamentally a manifestation of God's pure light and the whole period of time is but a process in which the realization of God's will is the ideal finality.

CREATION AND MOSES

*For Moses' sake the world began.*¹

Starting with the biblical warrant, 'Let there be light', the Samaritan conceived of the pure light manifesting itself.² This transpired when the Word, the *modus operandi* of the divine will, was declared. A drop of the pure light was set in motion by the activity of the creative Word. This started a chain of cosmic activity which resulted, among other things, in the image being 'ordered' for the pre-existent Moses—according to Sa'dallah, on the sixth day! From that point

the world was brought good tidings by him (C. p. 229.3).

What is meant by the bringing of good tidings to the newly created world seems to be a sort of 'final touch' to the handiwork of the Creator. The one who is thought of as being the Logos of God was present during the creative process and, as it were, was responsible for the coming of the image, specially prepared or ordered for him, into the supreme creation, man. That the world was begun 'through him' is a not uncommon expression and may reflect the New Testament statement that without the Word was not anything made that was made (John 1.3), i.e. giving the impression that the Logos was very much involved in the whole creative drama.

Ben Manir called Moses 'the light and sun of creation' (C. p. 107), thus stating the function in terms of the light which the pre-existent Moses, the Logos, had. Since the sun, in the Samaritan cosmology, was the source of energy that vitalizes the earth, so Moses is the source of light (energy) that was active in creation. It is nowhere *expressly* stated that Moses was the agent of God's activating power, but rather Moses is the 'foundation and origin of all light';

He was light taking root in righteous believers . . . light revealed and manifested in every meritorious person and constantly renewed till . . . [Moses' birth] (C. p. 743.22-24).³

The same light that was active in creation, Moses was in effect 'the real light which enlightens every man' (John 1.9). In the Day of Atonement Liturgy we have a good expression of the place of Moses' light in creation:

¹ Liturgy, *passim*.

² I.e. it was previously existing, but not manifested.

³ This important hymn teaches that there was no racial or national factor involved in the receipt of the light, only the spiritual factor.

Moses, holy light, whence creation was set in operation . . . Moses whose light radiated (C. pp. 683.35-684.1).

The eternal nature of his light is stated by Hibatallah, when he writes:

The mighty one of the world, the light which never becomes extinguished, his light is everlasting (C. p. 226.11).

He then goes on to say that Moses' light 'shone in the firmament of Levi and finally arose (dawned) in the world as the son of Jochebed and Amram'. It is clear from the literature of all periods that the pre-existing Moses, the pure light, was the same *in essence*, if not *in substance*, as the historical Moses.

It is not, however, always agreed apparently that Moses was *the* light, although all Samaritans would agree that he was *of* that light, for according to Sa'dallah (C. p. 229) Moses was given 'a drop of light' from the moment God said, 'Let there be light', which seems to say that the form who was to become the historical Moses was *given* light. In actual fact, Sa'dallah may have assented to the opinion that the pre-existing form which was Moses, the Logos, was itself *in* and *of* the light, not emanated or created *from* the light.

CREATION AND ANGELS

Standing between the upper and lower worlds, between God's own realm and the physical world, are the angels. From the most ancient literature available it is clear that the Samaritans have believed in angels since earliest times, indeed from the time of the northern document E of the Pentateuch at least, which means that they have held to the belief for about 2,700 years! It will be necessary to speak of the place and function of the angels in Part Five. Here we may say something about their structure, before turning to the question of man's constitution. The best discussion available on this topic comes from the pen of Abul Hasan. In his chapter in the Tabbakh, he states that angels and men differ in their constitution. The former are constituted from the elements fire and air, the latter of earth and water (hence the flesh and blood).¹ He finds his biblical warrant for the constitution of the angels in the words

Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire . . . (Ex. 24.17).

¹ Abul Hasan does not mention the other two elements of which also man is composed, according to Markah and many other writers.

It will be obvious to many readers that the Samaritan interpretation of 'the glory of the Lord' is 'the angel of the Lord'. Abul Hasan finds support for his exegesis in the fact that the appearance of the glory of the Lord was witnessed by the Israelites. Thus he teaches that angels have appeared to man and something of their constitution can rightly be derived from the reports of men about them. Markah does not deal with the subject of the constitution of the angels, but he lists the occasions in history when men have encountered them.

As a result of their constituent nature they need no food and drink. They are so fine, says Abul Hasan, in their texture that they can almost be described as spirits without bodies. He proceeds to quote from the Pentateuch various passages that give expression to the nature of their existence, their upright stance, movement, speaking, hearing, seeing. Likewise they are described in the Law as being possessed of wings.

They have no internal organs, because they preceded the creation of those things that provide food. They do not work, because work is only undertaken in order to acquire the means of sustenance. They know nothing of evil, although their knowledge is not perfect; they are less than omniscient, but more knowledgeable than men.

Abul Hasan distinguishes two types of angels according to form. The first, the Cherubim, do not resemble human beings in their shape; no man, except Moses, has ever seen them, and no description of them is available to men. The other, unspecified, has no analogy on earth. He finishes his study by saying, 'This is all that careful study and information can glean of the formation of the (inhabitants of) the upper world.'

The relationship of angels to God and to men will be discussed in Part Five, where their function in the cosmos is stated to be 'inter-world' in the main. They do not play a very active role but serve apparently as part of the glory of God, and are therefore present in all things that are cosmic in signification.

CREATION AND MAN

We have already observed that man is the highest peak of creation in terms of the meaning of the cosmic creation, that he is distinguished by the image within him,¹ and that he is so made that he reacts to or reflects the Creator. It will be sufficient here to set out

¹ See further the view of the commentator on Chapter I.27 of Chronicle I concerning the image (M. Gaster, *The Asatir*, pp. 191-3).

some aspects of Samaritan belief, and leave the main considerations of man's nature and his place in the world to Part Three.

That great scholar Gesenius who was the first to translate Samaritan hymns (in his *Carmina Samaritana*, 1824) asserted:

Præcipua omnium creatorum scintilla est de veste tua (igne tuo).

The 'spark' or 'drop' of light within the form of man is his unalienable right, for the reason that he could not manifest, reflect or express the nature of his Creator unless he was possessed of the pure light that is of God. The Samaritans were not by any means the first to conceive of the idea that the soul of man contains or is a receptacle or a state of being in which there is the light of the Creator. Posidonius of Apamea (died c. 50 BC) expressed the parallel thought, when he said:

The soul is a portion of the fiery cosmic spirit, descended from heaven and imprisoned in a body.

Some Samaritan writers assent to the notion that the body is a sort of prison-house for the light, but would always avoid any suggestion that it contains a *part* of the spirit of God. As has been observed, the Samaritans studiously avoid any claim that the spirit of God is quantitative in manifestation; indeed, they would avoid reference to God's spirit as much as possible. With a few exceptions they succeeded in this until the late seventeenth century. They would agree with Plotinus, one of the founders of the Neo-Platonic school of thought, that in the end man's chief end is to return to God, so that his soul becomes one with the supreme soul, after it has been cleansed of all that separates it from him.

Several Samaritan works speak of Adam and Eve before the fall being clothed entirely in light. With the fall came the diminishing of the light and the acquisition of a covering of skin, in which, according to a few commentators, is the 'evil impulse'.¹ For the latest teaching about the clothing of light, the Malef 27, 28, should be consulted.²

It is interesting to observe, as an aside, that Moses, possessor of the highest manifestation of the light amongst men, experienced the brilliant radiance of it on his face, as though 'the skin of his face

¹ I.e. the *yezer ha-ra'* of Judaism.

² For a similar Judaist tradition, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. I, p. 74, and Vol. V, p. 97 n. 69.

shone' (Ex. 34.30). In that experience at Sinai, he was, in a phrase, like unfallen Adam, a creature of light.

Markah offers a clear picture in his Memar of the components of man as a physical being. He begins with the statement that the form in Adam (= man) is glorious above all things, having power over all other forms. It is composed of four elements, the first being water, which is essential in everything living, the second dust¹ (or earth) which is merged with water by a process of great skill. These two elements were fundamental in all creation and so, he writes, were fundamental to the body. The other two elements, air and fire he regards as secondary,² but like almost all later writers he gives the four categories as constituents. He discusses the various types of each element in a manner familiar from Neo-Platonic philosophy and found also in early Judaism.

He makes an important statement when he points out that it was from the form and from mind that the body acquired its perfect (i.e. complete *in essence*) state, that the body is activated in a way that does not apply to any other created thing. The wisdom of God is to be seen most manifestly in the human form. The form precedes the processing of the elements to bring about the distinctive creature. Despite this last belief, the Samaritans seemingly did not develop any formal view of the pre-natal state of man.

Markah thus does not subscribe to the view that there were prototypes of creatures before creation, but rather that the created form (non-physical) coming from the pure light received its materialized form from the elements which it impregnated (Memar IV.2).

In another part of the Memar (II.8) he expresses a further aspect of the creative process whereby man was 'set up'. He states that fire and water combined in a quite special way in the creation of man. Essentially the matter of Adam's body was earth or dust, and its energy and intelligence were brought about by the activity of primordial fire, fire as an element being a category of the primordial fire; but wisdom as distinct from intelligence came from spirit, by which in this context Markah means the pure light. It is interesting

¹ Not, however, ordinary dust, but the unpolluted dust of Mount Gerizim. Judaism has a similar tradition—see Pirke Rabbi Eliezer (ed. Friedländer), pp. 76f. See also *Jubilees* 8.19 (of Mount Zion). For the tradition that Adam was created of dust taken from the site of the future Jerusalem Temple, see Genesis Rabba 14.8.

² In contrast to the situation of the angels, described above according to Abul Hasan, where the primary pair of elements in angels are secondary in man.

to note what Markah says here about the first thing the now animated and living Adam did; he filled the whole world with praises to the Lord of the world. This at once brings to mind the first answer in the Presbyterian Shorter Catechism: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God.'

In Book I of the Memar, section 2, Markah discusses the various attributes of man. The body was created in its structure with the spirit enclosed within it.¹ The enclosing of the spirit is as stated earlier, but he elaborates the function of spirit in man when he asserts that the intelligence was founded with the spirit, as the soul with the heart, thought with reason. He clearly believed in the trichotomy of man and never subscribed to a belief in man as a dichotomy. What he meant precisely by 'spirit' is not clear, but it seems to have had a vitalizing effect by making intelligence mobile, and thus we have the impression that we are really speaking of Markah's fourth category of light, which is to say that this particular manifestation of the pure light is called spirit in other language. In all these discussions we have to try to distinguish between Markah the philosopher and Markah the Samaritan doctrinalist.

One more question remains. This concerns the purpose underlying the creation of man. The Samaritans do not offer any explicit statements on this topic. In the religious poetry the purpose is that already mentioned—man's chief end is to glorify God. Hence man's first act after his creation was the filling of the world with praises. This is an ancient Samaritan tradition, found also in Judaism and Christianity. Thus the emphasis in the belief about man's duty in the world (and in the next) is on his capacity to express God, to manifest God's pure light and to live at the same perfect level as the perfect universe. In our study of man in Part Three it is noted that man is, in essence, one with the universe. Man, in a sense, is the true microcosm of the cosmos. As the heavens and the earth declare the glory of the Lord, so man in his perfection glorifies him in his existence.

No specific statements are made about the purpose behind the creation of the angels. Here, too, we are given the impression that their purpose is primarily that of adoration and praise, their function as messengers being secondary. This is the New Testament position, and we may say that the Samaritans shared the current ideas about angelic activities found widespread in the first few centuries before and after Christ.

¹ I.e. the *soma-sema* belief.

Man, a little lower than the angels, has to struggle towards the joy of expressing God, and that is where Moses comes in.¹

There is one unrepresentative view that we must briefly note. Readers may come across it in their studies. This is found most explicitly stated in the Malef 16.

The angel² of the Lord formed man of the dust of the earth and made him in our image and form. The Name³ breathed into him the breath of life and he became a soul endowed with speech, perfect in form.⁴

Judaism and Islam have similar traditions, but the Samaritans seem to have avoided it until very late in their history. In the fourteenth century a few writers, who often express variant concepts, gave the credit for the creation of man to the angel called Kebala.⁵ However, it is absolutely certain that such a view in no way reflects normative Samaritan teaching, nor does it represent the outcome of a long development. We may turn to any one of Samaritanism's sister religions for the origin of such a notion. For our purposes, such a belief belongs to the category of the unrepresentative.

PROVIDENCE

The Samaritans did not find it necessary to formulate any special doctrine of providence and hence we do not devote a chapter to it. Much of what is said in other chapters reflects the Samaritan attitude to the subject. The Law already supplied all necessary beliefs in this respect. God demonstrated his providential care for all his creatures in the very way that he created them. Each species by its nature reproduces itself in a regular way. The form in which it exists was so wisely created that it will always remain, passing from generation to generation in the seed. It may well be argued that the Samaritans really conceived of the image *in creatures* as essentially its seed for reproduction. If this is the case, then the variations between creatures

¹ There are many expressions in the Liturgy such as: 'the world was created for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'; or 'for Moses' or 'for Israel'. These can only be properly assessed within their respective contexts; they do not present a representative view in the general terms which we are concerned to observe.

² There is a Judaist tradition that God asked the opinion of the angels before he created man (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* I, p. 153).

³ The practice of calling God 'The Name' is late in Samaritanism; it developed much earlier in Judaism.

⁴ For the constitution of Adam before the fall according to the Malef, see Question and Answer 27. For Samaritan teaching about Eve's constitution and nature, see the Malef 25, 33.

⁵ The names of the angels are discussed in Chapter XX.

of any one species are due to differences in the seed. If this were applied to man, then the Samaritans must have had the idea that differences in characteristics, not always physical ones, were due to genetic effects. This would be close to the latest modern discoveries which have arisen in the fields of biology and psychology and other scientific disciplines. We cannot provide actual statements on this which are explicit; we must infer the probability from the general tenor of Samaritan belief in this field. When we examine the doctrine of man more closely, we shall note several factors that seem to suggest this.

One reason for the fact that the Samaritans did not develop a corpus of teaching about divine providence by itself is that the concept is implied in the perfect state of creation. Everything made is complete and perfect *in essence*. On this theme Samaritan teaching is precise and concise. The Samaritans did not experience the difficulties of many Judaist thinkers implied in the following quotation:

Finally, everything that God made belongs to the completeness of the created world, however superfluous flies and fleas and mosquitoes may seem to men.¹

The providence of God for the Samaritan in the earliest period applies only because of man's sin. Any defect in life, caused wholly by man, brings into being the need for God's providential care. In the mediaeval world the Samaritans, under Christian and Islamic influences, saw in plague and other natural calamities the need for God's intervention by way of providential act. But in essence the Samaritan belief does not include any answers to such questions as: Why should the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper? The question seems hardly ever to be asked, except perhaps in the sphere of poetic metaphor, while in Judaism and Christianity it has been and is asked over and over again. The reason for the Samaritan's comparative silence on such questions will become clear in our studies in Part Three.

That God had acted within the historical context is abundantly clear from the Law. Where the Samaritans presented a case distinctive of their own philosophy lies in the fact that God, it is believed, manipulated the elements themselves in order to save his elect from danger and even extinction. The biblical warrant, again, allows the

¹ Moore, *Judaism* I, p. 382, quoting Eccles. Rabba on 5.8. Cf. also Gen. Rabba 1.13 and Deut. 32.4, one of the two Samaritan proof texts for the belief in a perfect creation, the other being Gen. 2.2.

Samaritans to develop this theme, and Markah does so most emphatically. This is examined in connection with the doctrine of salvation.

In the moral sphere, God has so constructed man as a 'bundle of interacting qualities' that he has many possibilities for self-redemption. More specific is the means of grace available to him. God has provided for every man the means of developing himself as a spiritual being that the light which illumines men may manifest in them to a higher degree.

There is considerable stress on the constant renewal by God of creation. This is the Samaritan way of describing what we would call evolution. The world does not wear out. Trees do not die for ever. Brooks are dry but for a season. Judaism has a similar outlook, though it is not stressed so much.¹ Moore reminds his readers of this truth as expressed in the ancient Judaist prayer called *Yoşer Or*.²

In physical and spiritual terms respectively Markah demonstrates the provision made by the Creator:

He created all and fashioned all. He sustains all by his mighty power. He raised heaven on high without the use of pillars and topped it with manifold wonders. He also supplies its needs both from it and within it, so that he makes known thereby the greatest extent of his power, for the earth produces of its own essence and it needs the expanse of heaven (Memar VI.1).

As the sun greatly supplies the needs of souls, so you, Moses, are the one who brought into being that by which souls live. You are the one who supplied the world with the light of life, to make men who believe in him great (Memar VI.8).

These two passages adequately demonstrate the chief aspects of God's providential care. The second passage provides us with a picture of the ultimate means of grace, whereby men are cared for in the world. The function of Moses as supplier of light, of life and of truth is fundamental to the Samaritan attitude toward life. This subject leads us now to an examination of the Samaritan beliefs about Moses, the second tenet of the creed.

¹ Cf. Psalm 104.10-30.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 386 n. 6.

PART TWO

MOSES, LORD OF THE WORLD



MOSES: INTRODUCTION

*Moses is the apostle of God, the sun and light of the world, the faithful one of God's house, the crown and diadem of the world.*¹

SAMARITANISM, AS A religious and philosophical system, is unique in one respect. Though derived from the same source as Judaism and having the same Pentateuch (broadly speaking), it developed a belief in Moses, its only prophet, as the pre-eminent one of all humanity, the specially endowed of God. Like Christianity, it elevated its chief historical figure to the highest degree, but unlike Christianity it did not accredit him with divine sonship. So pre-eminent is Moses in Samaritan belief that it is true to say that Samaritanism cannot be understood without regarding belief in Moses as basic and central. No single doctrine can be truly understood or assessed without reference to him. He figures in every aspect of activity in the world, whether in eras of favour or disfavour. In this respect he is like Christ, and indeed we must devote a section of this book to a comparison between Moses and Christ.² This comparison will be the first ever made on the basis of all the relevant material to hand, though not the first comparison on the basis of less representative material.

What can be said of Moses in general terms, before we examine the distinctively Samaritan concepts of this cosmic figure? The Samaritans held to the Pentateuchal presentation of the historical Moses, of course. Was he not the founder of the Hebrew nation? He was not the progenitor of it; that honour went to Abraham, as the Muslims and Judaists also hold. What Moses did was to weld a nation out of a number of loosely bonded tribes of a confraternity. He it was who revealed to them the mysterious divine name that was to act as a religious pivot on which all belief about God was to move. Was he not also the architect of the religion of Israel? He it was who

¹ C. p. 707.26-27.

² In Chapter XXII.

revealed the laws of God. It was through him that the way of life designed and demanded by God was made known to the migrant peoples who were called Israel. Was it not he who proved the means of salvation? God worked his will for the elect people Israel solely through Moses, and as such Moses thereafter was thought of as Israel's own saviour.

We shall have occasion later to discuss some of the typical attributes of Moses and to investigate the chief titles given to him by the Samaritans. It is important in these introductory pages to have a true evaluation of the complete uniqueness of the figure of Moses in Samaritan thought.¹

Some idea of the astonishing pre-eminence given to Moses is conveyed by Markah's statement,

The shining light which abode on his face is with him in his tomb. It will not abide ever again on another's face (Memar V.3).

This statement was made in the context of describing the death and assumption of Moses. So, in Islamic terms, Moses was the last, the seal, of the prophets sent by God. Such a remark, frequently met in the mediaeval writings, illustrates well how the Samaritans would go to almost any length to elevate the status of Moses—even, as in this last case, to the extent of overlooking their own doctrine! For Moses could not have been regarded, in pre-Islamic times, as the 'seal' of the prophets, for to the Samaritan there was only one prophet and that was Moses. However, we can understand the Samaritan position in the Silver Age when the old, excellently thought out position was being subjected to new and alienating influences on every hand.

Markah in the last quoted passage goes on to point out that there could be no other true prophethood, since Moses', the only true prophethood, was hidden away for ever. So he spoke of the historical Moses in a book about the historical life of Moses. But we shall observe in this chapter how the real situation in Samaritanism reflects a cosmic outlook on the prophet. The historical figure certainly had passed away, but as many Samaritan thinkers believed, he would come back again, not as the historical prophet, but in quite another role; this we shall examine in the chapter on the Taheb (Chapter XVI).

Something has already been said about the essential second tenet of the creed, i.e. belief in Moses the servant of God. In the original

¹ It is highly probable that the starting-point for the belief in the uniqueness of Moses was Deut. 34.10, a verse quoted extremely often in Samaritan literature.

form of that creed there may well have been only two tenets, belief in the one God and belief in the one prophet Moses. After we have examined the cosmic role of Moses immediately below, we shall discuss what belief in Moses really meant to the Samaritan.

In our study of the doctrine of God, the cosmic view of the world peculiar to the Samaritans was pointed out. We are now to note how Moses' function and role were interpreted in universal terms. In the Liturgy we read of Moses as

Exalted man, lord of all the world, the crown of humanity, who was sent as saviour of Israel . . . the great prophet Moses, lord of all worlds (C. p. 726.19-20).

It is often stated that Moses was man *par excellence* and that his life had an everlasting quality. He is held to be 'lord of the generations, of the ages', an attribute that is only understood in terms of his prophetic role of Speaker for God. The later Samaritans¹ did not connect this directly with the eternal Logos or Word of God, but the early Samaritans, who were more directly affected by Neo-Platonic and Gnostic ideas, did see Moses as eternal in this way. Existing before, in and after history, he lived for ever under God. The unique role ascribed to him is, even in the Roman era, applied to both worlds, for we read in Markah's Memar that

This is the prophet whose prophethood is a treasure which will not be removed from him as long as the world lasts; he is the father of wonders, the storehouse of miracles, the lord of the covenants, the *light of the two worlds*, the sun of prophethood, like whom there is no prophet from the whole human race. The living listened to him, the dead feared him; heaven and earth did not disobey his words (VI.9).

It is to be noted in this connection that Deut. 32-34 is important for the origins of Samaritan ideas about Moses. Not only will there be no other prophet like him (34.10), but heaven and earth were obedient to him, a thought derived and expanded in cosmic terms from 32.1, a verse often subjected to this kind of exegesis in the later writings as well.

An extension of the belief that all the universe was subject to Moses is that heaven and earth, the elements, the sun and moon, etc., in various poems of the fourteenth century appear to speak as subjects of Moses' dominion. Here is a statement made to apply to Earth in the Liturgy.

¹ I.e. from the time of the Malef.

Crown and diadem of the world, holiest of the sons of men, through whom the world prospers . . . the drop of light that spreads out over hill and dale, the word of living truth (C. pp. 749.31-750.1).

The relationship of the unique figure of Moses to the divine light is discussed in Chapter VI, and his relationship to the Word in section 3 of that chapter, but we may note here the effect of his existence on the whole world as his light radiates over it.

I · BELIEF IN MOSES

The form taken by this belief, the second tenet of the creed, at once leads us into something like the Christian environment, because almost everything said about belief in Moses could be applied to the Christian in his belief about Christ. The first thing that has to be said in this connection is that such belief is necessary to salvation. No man, says the Samaritan, can please God unless he believes with all his heart and soul in Moses the servant and Man of God. We use the capital 'M' always in this connection because of the unique Samaritan stress on the Hebrew phrase *'ish ha-'elōhim*, 'man of God' in Deut. 33.1.

Moses was God's highest and most direct means of revelation. Likewise human inspiration finds its best expression and its greatest promise in belief in Moses. Belief, even before works, places a man on the road to the True One. Belief and works together ensure that a man will travel that road successfully and in peace. There is a problem, however, in regard to the nature of belief as understood by the Samaritans. They seem to have held that belief was faith. In other words, such belief was no mere mental assent. True belief in fact involved the doing of God's will as expressed through Moses; it necessitated the regular and voluntary performance of all the Mosaic laws. It involved, too, the meditation upon Moses as the supreme means of reaching towards the will of God.

That Christian influence helped towards the formulation of the Samaritan concept of belief in Moses seems beyond doubt. Here is a typical example from Markah's writings that is a close parallel to a famous New Testament passage.

He who believes in Moses believes in his Lord (Memar IV.7).

Compare this with John 14.1:

You believe in God, believe also in me.¹

¹ Revised Standard Version note.

The New English Bible version,

Trust¹ in God always; trust always in me,

may or may not reflect the original sense of the statement, but even here the direct association of belief or trust in God and belief or trust in Christ clearly resembles the Samaritan statement.

Another close parallel, which presents little variation in the translation of the original Greek, is found in John 8.12:

No follower of mine shall wander in the dark; he shall have the light of life.

The Authorized Version again appears closer to the Samaritan, but let us be content to observe the relationship of thought with the Samaritan

He who follows in Moses' footsteps will not go astray, but will serve in both worlds (Memar IV.9).

It is abundantly clear from the Markah formulation of the doctrine of belief in Moses that it leads to eternal life.

A third example of a Markah statement resembling a Johannine in this regard is found in the Memar IV.8

His words were from the words of his Lord. Believe in him and you will be safe from all wrath.

The first part of this quotation recalls at once the words of John 3.33:

To accept his witness is to attest that God speaks true; for he whom God sent utters the words of God.

One further Samaritan expression about Moses, put thus by Markah and others,

Moses is the true prophet sent by God.

suggests the New Testament parallels:

Surely this must be the prophet that was to come into the world (John 6.14).

This must certainly be the expected prophet (John 7.40).

Many other passages speak of Jesus in that vein, asserting the true nature of Jesus' mission. He was 'sent' by God. So the Samaritan belief about Moses (and the Islamic about Muhammad).

Why should Christianity have influenced Samaritanism so much?

¹ The Aramaic word underlying the Greek *πίστις* (*πιστεύειν*) was almost certainly (*h*)*aimenūta*, and both have the primary meaning 'trust', hence 'faith' rather than 'belief'. The Samaritans always prefer *'aimenūta* for 'faith' and use it for 'belief' in God and Moses.

Certainly the Samaritans lived with Christian neighbours and there must have been countless arguments on religious topics. The Nicene Creed laid it down that Christian belief consisted of belief in God, then (immediately following) belief in Jesus Christ. Whether the Samaritans had their first two tenets in that order before Nicaea is impossible to say. No doubt they had, but whether they had or not, the Christians had stressed these tenets of their creed, and influence on Samaritan thought there surely must have been—certainly in Sebaste.

The unique status of Moses, which was not emphasized in Judaism to the same extent, compares then with the similar status accorded to Jesus in orthodox Christian teaching. It is along these lines that we must seek the development of Samaritan thought about Moses, the light of the world, the Man of God.

2 · THE ATTRIBUTES OF MOSES

Something of the unique status of Moses is to be seen in the many titles given to him. These titles number so many that it is necessary to divide them into two main types: (1) ascriptive titles which are derived direct from the Pentateuch and those that are derived by implication; (2) those that have particular significance, esoteric or cosmic in the main. Some of the latter are derived from the Pentateuch too, but their special significance places them in a separate category.

Of the first group we have such obvious titles as 'good one', 'righteous one', 'faithful one of God', none of which need surprise us in any way. That he was 'the highest of men' or 'the most choice of humanity' can by implication be explained on the grounds of his earthly accomplishments as leader and saviour of Israel, or on the ground of Deut. 34.10. He is called 'master of knowledge' and this, an idea found also in Judaism, is explained on the ground of his function as lawgiver and prophet. 'Honoured leader', 'teacher', 'priest', 'judge' and even 'king' are titles that have to do with historical activities. Similarly, 'messenger' or 'apostle' and 'supplicator' refer to two important aspects of his earthly mission. All these titles are or could be applied to Christ by Christians. In many passages in Samaritan literature he is spoken of in a special way as 'the Levite' and 'the elect son of Amram'. These two titles are more significant in that they are used in a way that gives the impression of absolute distinctiveness. That he was a Levite is explained in terms of the

'eternal priesthood' of God's elect. There was a period, long after the composition of the Pentateuch and before the advent of Christianity, when the Levitical status of Moses was greatly stressed in early Judaism. Whether this special stress is connected with the divine covenant with Levi recorded in Malachi (2.4, 8) or not is difficult to say, but we have more light on the subject in connection with the 'one who is to come', i.e. the Messiah. Two lines of expectation in this field turned on the tribal origin of the expected Messiah. One line involved the belief that he would come from the tribe of Judah, the other that he would be from Levi (from which tribe many joined the Samaritans, according to Chronicle II). We can well understand the Samaritans seeking a Levite origin rather than a Judaeans, as the Samaritans regarded the descendants of the southern kingdom as people who had turned away from the true worship and the true faith from the time of Saul.

Of course 'Levi' implies something else. It explicitly refers to the priestly status of Moses. Perhaps we do not think of Moses as a priest, only as a prophet, but the Samaritans remind us frequently of the fact that he was a priest, though he functioned mainly as a prophet, leaving the priestly duties to his brother Aaron and his sons. Indeed the Samaritans in early times probably thought much on this subject. If Moses was a Levite and the most eminent of all Levites at that, why did he not act primarily as a Levite priest? This is explained in terms of Moses' cosmic role. He was sent by God in a special way; he was no ordinary mortal. Aaron was not sent in this special way, but he had a unique association with Moses. In *Memar Markah*, Book I, we read of the cosmic repercussions of the union of Moses and Aaron, when they met to enter Egypt and encounter Pharaoh at God's command.¹ Aaron had the special duty of acting as spokesman for Moses, because Moses had lived in Midian so long that he had long since ceased to speak the Egyptian language. Moses was the inspired one, who alone of all men received the revelations of God. Only through him—hence his prophethood—did God reveal himself in the era following the patriarchal. Aaron as spokesman for the purpose of carrying out the will of God was primarily the priest and not truly a prophet. The atonement for the sins of Israel was carried out solely through Aaron and his sons; it was Moses' task to draw Israel's attention to their sins.

¹ For the full development of theological thought on the union of Moses and Aaron see the *Zimmun* services in the Liturgy (C. pp. 428-42, 94-113).

The other title 'the elect son of Amram' is easily misunderstood, if we do not have regard to the basic Samaritan beliefs about Moses. As it stands in isolation, the title could be understood to mean simply that of the sons of Amram and Jochebed it was Moses only who was elect, specially chosen by God for a particular purpose. The Samaritans never meant that and the title is really to be read 'the elect, the son of Amram'. Little is said about the selection of Moses, because God did not really choose him in that sense. As we shall see below, Moses pre-existed as an entity, but within the human context and especially the context of salvation, Moses was obviously not like other men. He had been 'chosen' by God to reveal his will and receive his revelations for higher teaching. Judged from the human side, Moses clearly was 'select, elect'; judged from a cosmic view, Moses was never chosen in any sense, for he existed before the beginning. Indeed he was the first of all created things in that he was the first manifestation. That he was the son of Amram through an unusual process of procreation is discussed under the subject of the birth of Moses. All told, Moses in the human environment, the historical setting of Israel, was a Levite, son of Amram and Jochebed, highest and most select of all men.

We turn now to some special titles that have more wide-reaching implications, leading us towards the main themes of the teaching about Moses.

We begin with two titles that are derived from the Pentateuch. First, Moses was the *servant* of God. This is a title that receives much prominence, but here again we must not place too much dependence on the word 'servant'. After all was not Cyrus the 'servant' of God according to the Old Testament?¹ We have to reckon with the fundamental meaning of the word *'ebed* in the Hebrew language. In its earliest usage it meant 'slave' and only later came to have the superior status of 'servant'. In Samaritan thought 'servant' as applied to Moses was closely connected with the Christian idea of 'son' as applied to Jesus. To gain a clear picture of this, we may compare the words of Num. 12.7 with those of Heb. 3.5f. According to the former Moses was 'servant . . . faithful in all God's house', and according to the latter Moses was 'faithful in all his house as a servant' (v. 5) and Jesus was 'a son over his house' (v. 6). The application of 'son' in the Christian sense appears to be a new element, for the Samaritans never called Moses 'son' of God. We may indeed

¹ Isa. 44.28 and 45.1 by implication.

claim that they studiously avoided anything that would raise problems akin to those encountered early in the Christian era in Palestine by the Christian trinitarian formula. Thus the Samaritans refused to say anything about the Holy Spirit or about the fatherhood of God. However, it is just possible that the words *ben beti* (son of my house) in Gen. 15.3, referring to the heir of Abraham (progenitor of Israel and first of the righteous three of the world, according to Samaritan teaching), first provided the idea inherent in the Samaritan application of the title 'son of God's House', which we shall now examine.

Trotter points out¹ that the core of the argument as it appears in Hebrews 3 is that of a distinction between *therapon*, one who serves, attendant, minister, servant, and *huios*, son, implying kinship. A *doulos* was a slave under bond; a *therapon* was a servant, but not under bond. Thus Moses' status as servant has a distinctive *motif* in Samaritan thought. He was not just one who carried out orders from God; he was one who ministered to God. He was the 'faithful one in God's House', a trusted minister of God, never a slave, never a mere amanuensis.

That Moses was also 'the son of his House' we have observed. This is one of the most common titles of Moses and obviously had special significance for the Samaritans, as also for the Mandaeans; in the case of the latter the title had rather an esoteric sense. In the case of the Samaritans the title has a cosmic sense only. The phrase 'House of God' is normally rendered 'Beth-El' and hence 'Bethel' as a place name as the phrase is applied to Mount Gerizim, the place of the dwelling (Shekhinah) of God, but in Markah's Memar it occurs as 'Beth-Elohim' (which cannot be rendered as a place name). This last has the full and absolute sense of the realm of the supreme deity, whereas Beth-El has too many historical, and thus localized, associations. In Heb. 10.21 something of the same thought of the Samaritans is found, where we learn that Jesus was 'a great priest over the house of God'.

Within the wider context of Samaritan belief, we can see that Moses was 'the son of God's House' in the sense that he belonged in the universe as the minister of God. This thought must be connected directly with the eternal nature and being of Moses, for no ordinary human being could be so described. Only Moses possessed that status,

¹ *Did the Samaritans of the Fourth Century know the Epistle to the Hebrews?* (Monograph Series no. 1 of Leeds University Oriental Society), 1961, p. 11.

perhaps to be compared with the status of Jesus as 'great High Priest' in heaven.

It was because he belonged to God's realm, the upper world in especial, that Moses was able to speak with God, to be with him face to face—not in any physical sense, as the Samaritan exegetes are quick to point out, for the physical world has no physical contact with the unseen realm that was the real House of God. They were one, of course, but the lower world is normally experienced by a man only when he is living at the level of life which is the world's. Only Moses belonged to both realms at the same time.

An actual distinction between the physical world and the non-physical is to be found in the writing of Amram Darah in the *Defter*, where he speaks of God having

magnified the son of his House above all the sons of the house of Adam (C. p. 32.17),

in which statement we find the world of humanity described as a 'house'.

That such a distinction between mortal man and Moses might have been due to Christian influence is more than likely, but there is no exact information available. It may well be that, as we have shown elsewhere several times, the Samaritans were able to adopt or otherwise assimilate a Christian idea, provided it had some warrant or grounding in the Pentateuch, in this case Deut. 34.10. We have indeed mentioned a passage above where the expression 'son of my house' occurs in the human environment. That by some process of exegesis the Samaritans could authorize their new concept from Christianity would not be out of keeping with the character of early Samaritan religion.

Another element in the picture is that Moses 'was entrusted' with the House of God. This frequently occurring Samaritan statement is bound up with the concept of Moses' status of God's 'regent'. It was believed that God allowed Moses to act thus 'in the lower world', and, furthermore, as Jesus could be the great High Priest and intercede for humans, so Moses was watchful over the affairs of men, while abiding in the upper world. In view of this it is not surprising that under later Islamic influence some Samaritans actually prayed to Moses as Muslims of some sects pray to Muhammad, and as Christians pray to Christ. The idea of praying to Moses may of course have come originally from the Christian practice of praying

to Jesus, but it seems to have been only under the influence of Islam that the practice became an actuality.¹

Had John 14.2 any influence on the Samaritans, as so many other Johannine passages had? That Jesus could speak of his Father's House must have impressed them when they first heard it. They had met Jesus and heard something of his teaching; they certainly knew of his teachings from the Judaists and from the Christians in their own territory. God's House in the Johannine view seems to have meant the same thing as it did to the Samaritans of the later Roman era. It was a cosmic concept. Yet the Samaritans did not fall heir to any adoptionist view. Round about the end of the second century and the beginning of the third there was much controversy in Christian circles over the adoptionist hypothesis. The Samaritans were surely well aware of the arguments involved. They did not succumb to them, however, and they refused to call Moses the son of God. 'Son of his House', and 'God's Man' yes, but 'son of God' never.

The sequel in this part of the book will make clear the wider implications of the teaching outlined above. For the Samaritans God is active in the world *in Moses*, his Word, his Man, the Son of his House. As G. H. C. MacGregor has put it, writing of Christ,

In Christ alone, says John, do we find the real interpretation, the true 'exegesis' of God.²

This is how the Samaritans view Moses, their Saviour.

Another title, based on Deut. 33.1, that is fundamental to the Samaritan evaluation and description of Moses, is the title 'Man of God' or 'his Man'. Although the Judaists and Christians too have the Pentateuch as part of their sacred literature, they do not emphasize this attribute of Moses. It is in Samaritanism alone that the title receives pre-eminence. Perhaps this pre-eminence derives from the fact that no other Pentateuchal figure was so called. Perhaps, on the other hand, we have to turn to Christianity for a clue to the Samaritan stress on the title. This would undoubtedly be bound up with what has just been said about Moses as the son of God's House and the servant of God. We can appreciate that the Samaritans could not call Moses the son of God, in direct association, because that would have involved them in a concept alien to their doctrinal

¹ For more information on this process, see the present writer's article 'Islamic Doctrines in Samaritan Theology', in *Muslim World* 50, 1960, pp. 279-90.

² *The Gospel of John* (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary), 1928, p. 22.

system and indeed drawn them into acceptance of an inchoate duality in a 'godhead'. The Samaritans never entered into such a thought, as far as we can discover, and no official recognition was ever given to such a notion in whatever disguise. What they understood by the title 'Man of God' is best demonstrated in Markah's Memar (VI.6). He does not explain it; he expounds it, stating that the Man of God was possessed of his power and that power was manifest in all his actions during his earthly life. Thus Moses was God's Man as distinct from other humans. God's Man meant the man, out of all men, through whom God manifested himself, i.e. through whom he declared his will for men. Thus God's Man was the most 'select' of men, in a figure of speech, the pre-eminent among men. As the first created being, materialized from his pre-existent bodiless state, born and dead with cosmic repercussions in both cases, Moses spelled humanity in the sense that Jesus for many is Man with a capital 'M'.

How God revealed himself through his Man we shall see when we study the teaching about salvation. Here we must observe that the concept of God's Man is central to the assessment of Moses' role. It is not in any way specifically referred to Moses' pre-existent or post-resurrection state. It is a title that is understood within the human context; it is involved with divine revelation to suffering humanity.

Next among the fundamental attributes of Moses is his role of Speaker. It is obvious that Moses was God's spokesman in the communication of divine law and in the carrying out of God's plan of salvation for Israel. Yet the title bespeaks more than that. This is a title that has cosmic signification as well as the more limited historical one. It is often connected with Moses the Word (Logos) of God. Right from the first expression of God's intention to create, the pre-existent Moses or Word of God announced or pronounced the divine *fiat*. It was Moses, the Word, the Speaker, who, it was believed, pronounced the will of God at creation. Now in another context we shall see how Moses was uniquely endowed with the name of God, a supreme revelation amongst all revelations. Some Samaritans in the mystical literature connected the Hebrew word for the divine *fiat* (*yehi*) with the name of God (*yhwh*) as revealed at the call and commission of Moses (Ex. 3). Thus *yehi* (let there be) was held to be intimately related to the divine *yhwh*, but there was no attempt at identification of the two, merely a belief in their intimate and mystical relationship. To the Samaritans the Tetragrammaton

meant 'eternal' (so Moffatt's rendering of *yahweh*) and they connected this meaning with the pre-creation existence of God and of his Word. Abisha b. Phinehas and many other thinkers connected Moses with creation as directly as possible;

(Moses) the Speaker at creation, the speaker of 'Let there be light' (C. p. 495.8).

We shall have more to say about Moses as the Logos in connection with creation elsewhere, but as a title 'the Speaker' is one of those absolutely unique attributes of Moses, placing him far above the realm of mortal humanity and bringing him into direct association with the will of God.

In later Samaritanism it became commonplace to speak of Moses as 'our lord'. We do not know whether this was due to Christian or Islamic influence, for in both these faiths the central figure is so described. It is possible of course that the Samaritans before Islam did refer to Moses as 'our lord', although the literary evidence is slight, but even if it was Islamic influence that brought the practice into the open, it was almost certainly one of those inherent things in Samaritanism that did not appear in any official way until Islamic influence became strong, perhaps too strong too ignore for reasons of prestige.

We can well understand the Samaritans speaking of Moses as the one who saved Israel from destruction in ancient times, but the practice of giving him the title 'saviour', even in comparatively modern times, does not seem to have become commonplace in the other religion from the same pre-Christian matrix, namely Judaism. Again we may turn to Christianity, not for the origin of the idea, but for the origin of the title as such. Jesus was everywhere spoken of by the early Christians as 'Saviour'. The Samaritans did not need to look far in their Law for warrant to use such a title. Many forms of the Hebrew roots meaning 'save' occur in connection with Moses, and the title was undoubtedly an easy one for them to adopt.

Lastly in our list of special titles that are not being examined in the doctrinal sections of the following chapters, we have Moses as 'the star'. There are various possibilities for the origin of this title. One is that it was used in the sense that he was the best, the greatest—a star among men. It would not be difficult to see in the title no more than an expression of Moses' pre-eminence. Thus Abdallah (C. p. 347) called him 'the star of the Levites', i.e. the most renowned

of them. On the other hand, not every usage of the title can be explained so easily. Abdallah and Abisha in several of their didactic poems in the Liturgy seem to mean more than that. It would seem that the real origin of the title is to be sought in Num. 24.17, where in the Oracle of Balaam we read:

A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel.

This reference may well have to be compared with one of the Samaritan 'proof-texts' about 'the one who is to come', referring to God's Messiah (although the Samaritans do not speak of a Messiah, only the restorer [Taheb]). They base their belief about the coming Taheb on Deut. 18.15, 18, where we learn that there is one who will be raised up, and this is related closely in the exegesis to the promise of Num. 24.17. When we examine the doctrine of the Second Kingdom in Chapter XVI we shall observe how Moses came in time to be regarded as the Taheb, as *Moses redivivus*. So the star, Moses, is the promised star, the one who will arise one day.

One other possible origin for the title could be in connection with the birth of Moses, for he was held to have been, as it were, a 'star orbiting in the constellation of Jochebed'; once in that constellation he came into the earthly environment and was materialized (born). This at once brings to mind the Christian nativity account, where the star is a prominent element in the heralded birth of Jesus.

Whatever the origin may have been, and it is always likely to be found based on biblical warrant, we can find an historical or a cosmic explanation of it. The fact is that the Samaritans were not always explicit in their categories, and of course we have to make our judgements on the basis of their extant literature alone; yet the historical situation clearly must not be divorced from the wider cosmic plan. What Moses was in his earthly life was only an aspect of his fuller role as servant, Man of God, son of God's House, the expresser of God's will, the vehicle of divine revelation, the very pronouncer of the divine *fiat*.

Some idea of the glorious state attributed to him is to be found in Markah's writings:

You drew near to the deep darkness and dwelt in the cloud [at Sinai]:
You were crowned with the light; you trod the fire and were in places
where no man had been besides you:
You called to heaven and it answered you and earth did likewise:

The waters were stilled at your words and could not dispel the force that subdued them:

So when you trod the fire, its might was brought low and you walked in it:

The angels glorified you and magnified your status, and the glory appeared to you (Memar VI.11).

VI

MOSES IN CREATION

I · CREATION

At the time of creation there arose an eternal, inextinguishable fire at the command of him who spoke the words . . . the Lord is a devouring fire.¹

IT WAS THE purpose of the preceding chapter to present to the reader a general impression of the rating of Moses in the Samaritan belief. Now we turn to more detailed examination of the different categories of Moses' existence and activity. Within the context of our study of God's creative act, we had occasion to say something about Moses and his place in that act. We now take the examination of the doctrine of creation, as far as it involves belief about Moses, a little further.

As has been stated, the primordial light pre-existed creation. A 'drop' of that light was activated by the creative Word. The fore-ordained image in Moses, which distinguished him from all other beings, was then 'ordered'. The pre-existing Moses would seem, then, to have been responsible for the image in himself. This belief, not specifically asserted but certainly inferred, might lead one to think of a doctrine of *kenosis* after the Christian fashion. Yet such a doctrine is nowhere spoken of. We may regard the situation here as bordering on the impossible, and the potential impossibility results from the fact that the Samaritans in their extant literature did not develop a close system of categories in this connection. What we may say is that the distinctive person of Moses, to be revealed in the historical and temporal situation, did not exist in that sense before creation. It was only after the Word initiated the creative process that Moses' image and the image of all other beings came to exist—even then in a pre-physical form. Before the creation of the image of Moses there was the Word, which is identified by many Samaritan

¹ C. p. 877.29-30.

writers, especially from the fourteenth century onwards, as Moses pre-existent. Thus we have the view that Moses existed in various forms, one before the beginning *with* God (as in John 1.1), one in the first creative period as an entity with an image, so that Moses existed in the upper world aeons of 'time' before his physical life in the lower world, and finally he attained (by *kenosis*?) his human birth and life. After death the historical Moses resumed (if he ever left it) his pre-existing spiritual state.

It would be easy to misunderstand the Samaritan position about the creation of Moses. Was he really created? In the Christian sphere the same question has been asked innumerable times about Jesus Christ. Was Moses begotten? It is clear from many passages in the literature that the Samaritans were willing to speak of Moses as created, but presumably only to the extent that his physical manifestation was through creation from the immaterial to the material. There is almost complete silence on whether his pre-existent life was created too. We do not have any declaration in the literature to show whether the Samaritans regarded his pre-existent state as resulting from divine emanation. It seems, on the whole, that they rejected belief in emanations, possibly because of their anti-Gnostic bias. On the other hand, there is a likely explanation in terms of 'light from light', as we see in the study of Moses in that regard. But Moses could be described as God's first creation. Ben Manir puts it in its simplest form:

Moses was the first that he created.¹

If we take the statement at its face value, then we may safely identify Moses with the light. However, the only available information that leads to this supposition is from the fourteenth and later centuries, when Islamic influences on Samaritanism were considerable. If we only had a clear statement from Markah on the subject, we would better understand the process of thought that led to such a statement.

If Moses in some 'form' or 'state' pre-existed his manifestation on earth, i.e. his existence with an image in matter, then we must assume that some sort of metamorphosis or metempsychosis took place, but no Samaritan writer to our knowledge has gone as far as to state this clearly. Montgomery, however, was confident that some such process did occur:

The connection between the pre-existent state and that in the flesh was

¹ Liturgy, *passim*.

mediated by a species of metempsychosis, the sacred germ of divine light being transmitted through his forebears until it fully incarnated itself in the prophet.¹

The evidence for such a specific assertion is by no means widespread in the available literature, and it may be that the Samaritans did not feel any need to formulate this idea and were content to restrict their teaching about Moses to those categories that had some relationship to their own dogmatic, Pentateuch-based, requirements. It is, of course, always possible that they were subject to many Neo-Platonic and Gnostic ideas that they did not formally accept, but subconsciously assumed and unconsciously stated.

We have next to observe the concept that creation took place not only in terms of Moses but *for his sake*. Following Markah many mediaeval writers formulated the principle that everything existed for his sake. In the Defer (C. p. 69) we read that the world was created *for the sake* of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, i.e. the righteous three of the world. If this view was seriously maintained, and it is repeated often enough by various writers, then we can take it that the Samaritans from early times believed that one aspect of the purpose of God's creating was the life of righteous men. That is to say, God created that godlike men might live and express him. In this sense Moses could have been brought to the created state and creation could have taken place in terms of him. But more often than not the idea implicit in many expressions that are subject to translation difficulties is that of John 1.1-3.

When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was. The Word, then, was with God at the beginning, and through him all things came to be; no single thing was created without him.

It is worth quoting this passage, since it helps greatly in the clarification of the Samaritan position. There are many difficulties in comprehending the various statements from different periods, but some light is thrown on the matter by the teaching of a late part of the Defer (C. p. 84), where we learn that the Man of God was *raised up* for creation. Thus Moses, the first to be created, was created for the sake of the creation that was to follow. In one sense he was the prototype of all created human beings. This brings us to the idea that the pristine Adam was modelled on the pre-existent Moses. So Moses was indeed *the Man* of God in more senses than one.

¹ *The Samaritans*, p. 228.

In the same passage in the Defter we read:

The Man of God, the universal prophet, whom the Lord raised up for the creation and for the Day of Vengeance (C. p. 84.27-28).

Many passages state that Moses' existence involved the temporal scheme within the cosmic whole; he existed (i.e. came to the created state) in order that creation might take place. We see now how close to the Johannine position the Samaritan is.

Moses' physical life was also for the redemptive purposes of God and the revelation of the will of God to men, that they might be prepared for the consummation of creation, the Day of Vengeance and Recompense. Moses' role takes in the whole span from creation to the last day, prior to the new world and the new life (like the pre-existent life) in the world to come. Like Jesus in Christian teaching, the Samaritan Moses was the first and the last.

What was the Samaritan motive behind such teaching? How is it that their whole cosmic scheme centred in its teaching on the sole figure of Moses? It is not at all unlikely that the Samaritans were avoiding the idea of hypostases, viewing the personification of holy spirit, wisdom, glory, and so on, which was typical of early Judaism and the Gnostic systems, with some suspicion. Moses was the beginning, centre and end of all life. God only expressed himself through and in him.

It is transparent that a religious system that has all this to say about its central figure will believe that he is the means of providence too. This is precisely what some writers say. We read in the Liturgy, in the Day of Atonement main service, that it is

On account of Moses that all creation exists well (C. p. 513.2-3).

We shall better understand this when we examine more closely the concept of Moses the light of the world, where we learn how his light radiates all over the world and lightens every man.

2 · LIGHT

*May the light of Moses shine for us, which once blazed over us!*¹

This quotation brings together the two main streams of Samaritan thought about the light that came from God before the divine *fiat* was pronounced. As is the case with so many Samaritan doctrines

¹ C. p. 519.3-4.

influenced in their development by Christian teaching, there is a biblical warrant for the belief. The warrant comes from the story of the theophany on Mount Sinai told in Ex. 34, where we read that Moses descended with the two tablets of stone in his hand, and *his face shone*. In the liturgies this biblical account is often repeated with varying epithets and hyperbolic descriptions. It is a theme central to the concept of the unique status of Moses as one between God and Israel. His 'otherness' finds expression in the shining of his face after being before God during the wondrous happenings on Mount Sinai. 'The light that once burned upon us' has an historical setting; that it should still have value in the eyes of the Samaritan Israelites is something quite different. In our account of the creation and in the chapter on the pure chain we see that the Samaritans adopted something of the Gnostic concept about the primordial light, but that adoption did not involve the Gnostic implications. Rather did the Samaritans build upon their biblical account that which seemed to them to give an explanation of the relationship between Moses and God on the one hand, and between Moses and man on the other.

The relationship between Moses and God is discussed in Chapter VII in a wider context. Here it suffices to say that the primordial light which was brought into being by God was itself *of* God (cf. the Johannine description of the Logos in John 1.1). If it had not been for the environment of Gnosticism and Christianity, the Samaritans would almost certainly have retained the concept of light as applying solely to God, as on occasion throughout their theological and didactic hymns they do. The environment from which they plucked so many ripening fruits, however, enabled them to see that Moses was *of* God, as he was created *by* God, but never could it be claimed that he *was* God. That was in Samaritan eyes a Christian heresy.

The existence of a biblical warrant for a statement about Moses being the light made all the difference, as indeed such warrant from the Law was to make in many other connections, and once given the warrant the Samaritans by the Roman era had developed a matured doctrine that Moses himself was the light of the world, precisely as Jesus was the light of the world (John 8.12).

The process of development can be illustrated from the literature of the Roman period. From Memar Markah we read:

(The fourth wonder manifested in his physical form was that) he drew near to the deep darkness and at the end of his fast his face shone with

the light that appeared on it—more than the light of the sun and moon. All who saw it were afraid to approach him (II.12).¹

This statement, modelled on the biblical description, is often connected with a theme of a quasi-Temptation of Moses on the analogy of the Temptation of Jesus, also on a mountain. The extension of the biblical account above consists largely in a slightly enlarged and more pictorial description.

That the light on Moses' face was clearly associated with the divine light was recognized no doubt in the earliest times. Judaism has a similar tradition. 'The primordial light, which God had hidden shortly after its creation,

shone upon Moses during the first three months of his life; it was withdrawn from him as soon as Pharaoh's daughter took him to her house; it came back to him when he ascended on Mount Sinai and remained with him till the end of his life.'²

In the Memar it is stated:

Exalted is Moses, the faithful one who was *in the light* of the True One (IV.8).

Under the influence of early Judaist and/or Christian Gnosticism, the thought of Moses' light as an effective force in itself came into being, so that Markah could write of the time of divine favour that was past:

How glorious the time of righteousness, when there was an order wholly of prosperity, the time when the great prophet Moses lived, whose light illumined the two worlds (IV.12).

The extension of the concept of Moses' light being effective in this world, so common throughout every period of Samaritan literature, to it being effective in the 'other' world too, may have been due to the influence of Christianity, and possibly in particular of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

A similar thought in connection with the world, but this time expressing the fuller benefit of Moses' light, occurs in the Memar:

Woe to a generation from which Moses is withheld! There would be no light in it and none to repent of sin would be found then (VI.9).

Thus his light is a light that affects the welfare of men. Part of the teaching about the creative act and its sequel is that the pre-existent

¹ Cf. the similar *motif* in the Transfiguration of Christ, where, however, it was the sound of the voice that caused terror (Matt. 17.2, etc.).

² Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* V, p. 297 n. 2; Pirke Rabbi Eliezer, p. 378; Bab. Talmud, Sotah 12a.

light, of which Moses was and from one level to another of which he descended into material form, functions within the created corpus in a providential way. Just as the 'drop of light', a concept so familiar from the Gnostic systems, was transmitted from the pure Adam before the fall through the righteous of the world and found its glory and consummation in Moses, so all men are sustained by it. This is not the same idea as the influencing of men's moral behaviour; it has physical and mental ramifications too. A man is influenced for good by the light emanating from the sun; so he is sustained and given health of body and mind by the pure light that is ever existing in its pre-existing state. Thus Markah could express it in the *Memar*:

O Moses, the light of whose heart shines more brightly than the light of the sun, the sun greatly supplies the needs of souls, but you are the one who brought into being that by which souls live (VI.8).

The reference in the latter half of the quotation is to the creative function of the pre-existent Moses. The power of supplying need in the soul demonstrates the nature of man as recipient during his life of power from *God in Moses*. Such a thought, expressed in many ways throughout the Liturgy, is hardly to be applied to Judaism or Islam in their normative form. It is true that the notion of light as pervading human life is to be found in both faiths and indeed there are almost verbal parallels to this concept in the Hellenistic mystery religions and philosophies. It is in the Johannine literature of the New Testament most of all, with its Gnostic affinities, that there is to be found so much that was received and remodelled by the Samaritan theologians. In Rabbinic thought throughout the centuries following the closing of the canon of the Old Testament, God himself, as in the Samaritan and Christian systems, was described as light and 'light of the world'. In a few traditions the expected Messiah, whether the priestly or the Davidic, could be described in terms of his 'Messianic light'. Not only so, but the light that is the Messiah's is the light that is of God, according to some traditions, and indeed the Messiah's light is understood in some sources to be the light that came with the divine *fiat* (Gen. 1.3). That was no created light, but was the light that was reserved¹ by God and allowed by him to manifest itself in the righteous of men. This is almost precisely the Samaritan position, except that the Samaritan thinkers developed the concept into a whole system of belief which became

¹ Cf. the 'drop of light' reserved by God, according to Gnosticism.

central to their theology, whereas in normative Judaism (from Gnostic Judaism) it did not become an integral part of the faith.

Turning now to the mediaeval Samaritan attitude toward the primordial light that was in Moses and which illumined the world and the minds and souls of men, we find the tradition of the birth of Moses, discussed in Chapter VIII, receiving as a central theme the idea of light shining from the pre-developed form. Long before Moses' face was to shine (after he had been in the presence of God) the light of his glory, through which he had descended from his spiritual state into the material world, shone forth to the astonishment and wonderment of the daughter of Pharaoh and those who were in her company. This ancient tradition, found also in Judaism, is extended in the Samaritan account (e.g. C. p. 747) to the statement that when Pharaoh's daughter opened the ark, 'the light of the world was renewed'.¹ That is to say, presumably, the light in its pre-developed form, which brought illumination from the very moment of creation, and which had been allowed to radiate only in the lives of certain righteous ones throughout history, was renewed and now radiated again in Moses. A new era (of divine favour) was born!

The Tabernacles Liturgy makes frequent mention of 'our lord Moses, the light of the world' (e.g. C. p. 720), and we have a full account, though not in the correct order, in Amram b. Solomon's hymn:

(Moses), who is light from creation, and the foundation and origin for all light . . . shone in the firmament of Amram and descended into the womb of Jochebed . . . He was light taking root in righteous believers,² a light revealed and renewed within every meritorious one (C. 743.21, 24-25, 22, 23-24).

The full development of the notion of the all-pervading light of Moses in the world is set out by Ben Manir (whose father's name means 'illumining') in the Day of Atonement hymnal:

In the light that illumines, radiates, makes intelligent everyone who is perceptive (C. p. 679.5).

It seems not unreasonable to identify the thought of Ben Manir's statement with that of John 1.9, where

the real light which *enlightens* every man was even then coming into the world.

¹ Apparently the opposite of the Judaist tradition presented in Bab, Talmud, Sotah, 12a, etc.

² So John 1.9.

Such is the Samaritan position with regard to Moses as he leaves his pre-existent state and materializes in the world.

What was the nature *of* and *in* Moses? The theological position is that Moses was *light from light*, in the sense that he is in essence light, of the light of God, who issued from that light into the darkness of the material world. Since the world was created from and of that light, it was dependent on Moses; without him it could not have come into being, and without him it could not continue to exist (cf. John 1.3-4). The attributes of Moses, like those of God, in Samaritan thought cannot be easily separated or in any way differentiated for logical study, and it is found that all Moses' functions are bound up with the light and with each other through it. His function as Lawgiver is the handing on of light from the divine light; his role of saviour is to spread the light over the people. He brought life in and with the Law. Contemplation of that Law brings a deeper comprehension of the light in the qualitative sense. The Christian belief in the Holy Spirit is closely similar, as far as it goes, to the Samaritan doctrine of the pure light of God.¹ Gnostic influences there may have been in an environmental and terminological sense, but the Samaritan Moses was an incarnation (perhaps *the* incarnation) of the light.

As Adam (= man) was composed of the four elements and, in addition, the human image permeated with the light, so Moses was in his earthly life composed of the four elements and the image (with his own distinctive *form*) permeated with a higher manifestation of the light. It is clear that the Samaritans did not always distinguish between the image and the light, but in the mediaeval period they seemed to have a preference for the identification of them. It is a commonplace statement in the fourteenth century that

When Moses descended from Mount Sinai, the *image* was clothed with light.²

This is an attempt to explain the nature of Moses' actions and functions. Markah was the only thinker to study these in an analytical way, but he did not deal overmuch with the concept of the light *in* the image. It was apparently only in later times that the relationship between the innate light and the image was examined, though never analytically.

¹ Hence the development of belief in 'holy spirit' instead of light in the late mediaeval period, as attested by the Malef.

² For further development of this belief, see the quotation from the Malef 186 on p. 176 below.

Further evidence about the nature of the light that shone in Moses comes from the statement:

The lord of the world, the light that is never extinguished, whose light is everlasting (C. p. 226.11).

Having established the thesis that the light is not something that shines for but a moment in time, but indeed is eternal, we can at once attribute to it a fundamental status within the scheme of cosmic creation.

It may be said that the light represents the quintessence, i.e. the fifth element pervading the four physical, of ancient and mediaeval philosophy, so that Moses would have been possessed of the fifth, the pure essence. The nature and process of his birth may suggest this, but on the other hand, there is no obvious distinction between that 'drop of light' as it appeared in the lives of the righteous and as it manifested itself in the light of Moses. If we were to say simply that Moses was all light, while the righteous possessed only a small measure of the light, we would immediately run into the danger of giving the light of God a quantitative attribution. This would be as unwarranted as to ascribe a quantitative attribution to the Holy Spirit in Christianity. Samaritanism produces absolutely no evidence for such a belief.

Judging from the theological literature as a whole, it would seem that the Gnostic concept of 'a drop of light' emanating from the pure light of God was accepted by the Samaritans in the sense that all living beings have the light, but the light only manifests itself to a tiny degree (qualitatively) in men, even in the lives of the righteous of men, whereas in the life of the historical Moses it manifested in brilliant radiance.

All this is bound up with the nature of the image within man, which is discussed in Chapter X. We may say here that the light that pre-exists and will exist everlastingly in the world, manifested in Moses' birth through a transmissory process from one dimension to another, was responsible for his functions and roles in life, that it remained with him till the moment of death—

The shining light which abode on his face is with him in the tomb. It will not abide ever again on human face (Memar V.3).

In Markah's day, apparently, the light was thought of in terms of human life in the main, although the pre-existent nature of the light was understood, but it is in the post-Markah era that the full glory

of the light was comprehended. The one buried in the tomb, with the light yet abiding on him, is in any case dormant until the Day of Judgement, whereafter he will live eternally. It is the mediaeval period that gives us the metaphysical picture corresponding closely to the early Christian one.

The final stage in the study of the light in Moses is reached when we consider that it is the origin of all the world's light, whether physical, mental or spiritual. We have many statements to the effect that all light as understood in human terms derives from the divine light.

O radiant one, whose brightness fills the whole world;

O radiant one, from whose beneficence all lights are derived (C. p.20.8).

Thus all human and earthly light finds its source in the light of God, and the supreme source of it was the light of and in Moses. From the philosophical point of view, the derivation of human illumination from the divine and the derivation of Moses' light from the divine leads to the conclusion, expressed elsewhere in this book in another connection, that all light is essentially one thing, but it may manifest itself in various circumstances in different degrees. Once light existed (Gen. 1.3), it permeated all created things, Moses being the first and prototype of the image in man, the first to be possessed of the pure light.

It is not possible to separate the prophethood of Moses from the light of Moses, except in the most arbitrary way, although in this book, for clarification of the elements of Samaritan teaching and their origins, there is a separate discussion of Moses' prophetic role. This is necessary because, although his prophethood and the light cannot be separated in functional terms, they differ in their *locus* of manifestation. The Samaritans themselves throughout their literature did not attempt to distinguish his prophetic role from his role of lightbringer. So Sa'dallah in the fourteenth century combined the two in the expression:

(Moses) the light of the world and the sun of prophecy (C. p. 786.31).

Light of the Law, of the sun, of the world, light of prophethood—everything Moses did as leader, teacher, prophet, priest, Lawgiver, was conceived of in terms of the light. So Eleazar combines three functions:

Let God be reconciled to us through him whose light shone, Moses our prophet, the bringer of the Law (C. p. 489.13-14).

3 · LOGOS

We have already introduced the Word or Logos in connection with creation. A little recapitulation is necessary at this stage, that we may observe this aspect of the role of the cosmic Moses in its proper place. It has been suggested that it was Christian influence that enabled the Samaritans to develop the idea of the divine Word, based on Gen. 1.3, into a full Logos doctrine. That it was Christian influence, itself probably derived from Gnostic Judaism, is well illustrated in the following quotation from Markah's Memar, where Markah is speaking of wisdom primarily and goes on to relate wisdom to the Word.

It is far from us (now). We no longer recognize it, although it descended from heaven, although it was given to us and we once believed in it. The glory was round about it, for it was the Word of God (VI.3).

One does not have to be highly imaginative to see in this statement from the late Roman period much that is akin to the thought of John 1.9-11:

The real light which enlightens every man was even then coming into the world. He was in the world; but the world, though it owed its being to him, did not recognize him.

Markah is, of course, not merely copying or otherwise reproducing the thought of St John, but he has been influenced by it or some similar concepts, and has incorporated it within a wider scheme, which does not suffer from the isolation of the Prologue of St John's Gospel. Markah's usage is no restricted or rare one; it is indeed part and parcel of a much wider framework of thought.

In another part of the Memar, Markah is expounding the words of Deut. 32.6 in terms of the Hebrew letters of the words involved in that verse. He makes special mention of the word (one word in Hebrew) 'who established you', and demonstrates that this word has divine signification. He then states:

He who understands it knows that all was made by it (IV.7).

He does not specifically mention Moses in connection with it, but this identification is found often elsewhere. With Markah's statement about the Word just quoted we may compare John 1.3:

The Word, then, was with God . . . no single thing was created without him.

Thus all creation in the Johannine thought was brought to existence by the Word of God. In the Samaritan tradition the Word was indeed the signal for what God's wisdom had ordered to come into being.

He spoke the Word and it was accomplished; by it created things came into being (C. p. 746.16).

Tabiah b. Isaac gives us a picture of what happened:

The great God, Creator and Sustainer of the world, created everything from nothing by one word from him. At the moment of creation he brought forth words and creatures arose before him (C. pp. 770.33-771.3).

There is no doubt, then, that the Samaritans believed that the actual creation was a response to the Word, but 'who' was that Word if it was not some emanation from God? That Word was undoubtedly Moses, according to the unanimous belief of the mediaeval Samaritans. He is called 'the Word of living truth'¹ by the writer of the great poem entitled 'The Birth of Moses', namely Abdallah b. Solomon (C. pp. 746-753). Abdallah was one of Samaritanism's greatest thinkers and expositors, who was well aware of the Christian and Islamic theological debates that went on in his time. He would have been the last to identify the Word with Moses unless the identification was acceptable to his fellow Samaritans. It appears to be only in the fourteenth-century literature that this identification is made quite specifically, although from the evidence supplied by Markah the notion was at least implicit in the thought of his day.

In a poem, also on the birth of Moses, Abisha presents a long *midrash* on what happened when the Word went forth and creation began. In view of its unique setting and the fact that no parallel to this has appeared from related religious systems, we set it out in full, despite the fact that it is fraught with difficulties for the translator of the Hebrew.

Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak (Deut. 32.1) my word. What means this word, but that the Creator created? A word from the mouth of Moses went forth, and in his hands were the trumpets for blowing.

The trumpets represent a figure from ancient Hebrew ceremonial

¹ The expression is not Pentateuchal. 'The word of truth' occurs fairly often in the New Testament.

practice and were blown on many important occasions. The transference of the figure here is typical of mediaeval literature.

All the heavenly host were proclaiming,
'Begin, O priest; make proclamation.'

The calling of Moses 'priest' here further reflects the nature of the occasion as conceived by Abisha, for the blowing of the trumpets on important religious occasions was the prerogative of the priests and not of the laity.

At the same time they themselves were saying, 'This is a marvellous thing!' From the start they were saying to one another, 'Look, listen, my companion! What is this but glory? What is this but the voice of glory,¹ at the sound of which gates are opened.

A thousand years before, Markah had spoken of the gates of light 'opened' at creation, a thought found also in Judaism and Christianity.

All the constellations and their stars were listening, and the two Stars were speaking with Moses—quite audibly.

In another part of his poem Abisha clearly reflects the New Testament Transfiguration narrative, and here he brings in the 'two Stars' or 'shining ones', as if he had in his mind the two prophets Moses and Elijah of the Christian account. The inclusion of the constellations (creation now having taken place) in the scene demonstrates the cosmic setting of the whole event, an event beyond compare in cosmic history, in which Moses was the spokesman in yet another role, in the role of saviour of God's elect.

Each was saying (to Moses), 'Go, my master and lord.' The sun has told me, 'Address your people. Command them my word.' The constellation has told me, 'Seek, make covenant with them. Say to them . . . "My Maker has sent me to bring illumination, and every light is derived from my light."'

It is a favourite Samaritan trick to make the stars or the elements (and even the letters of the alphabet) speak, in order to convey the cosmic nature of some truth. This is most manifest in Markah's story of the Death of Moses (Memar V). Moses' role *vis-à-vis* the elect people of God is set out cosmically, then, in Abisha's teaching.

Why have I come to you . . . unless your life shall follow mine? . . . Why have the two of us come to you, unless to instruct you and that you may instruct the princes and eminent men of the people?²

¹ Or 'the glory' (of God), by metaphorical hypostasis.

² This passage may give us a hitherto unknown mediaeval understanding of the real meaning of the New Testament Transfiguration story.

We have to remember in studying this somewhat obscure passage that the writer is writing an exegesis of Deut. 32 (which begins with the mention of *two* parts of the cosmos), and his words have to be related to his exegetical scheme.

Lastly, what was spoken exactly? Confusion arises over the Logos doctrine, when we say that Moses was the Word, while the word was the divine *fiat*—yet Moses was not that *fiat*, only the spokesman of it. The Samaritans saw the problem of terminological confusion early, and by Roman times they had distinguished between 'the word' (Logos, Aramaic *milla*) and the (ten) words (*fiat*, Aramaic *millin*). The *fiat* consisted of ten words as listed in Gen. 1.¹

The divine *fiat* is not the only 'ten words'—there are three lists of biblical verses thus described: (1) the creative words, (2) the Decalogue (Ex. 20) spoken by Moses 'the speaker' (Logos in the world), (3) the ten words of mercy (Ex. 34.6-7). Thus the Samaritans view Moses' role of Logos or spokesman as continuing throughout his earthly life too.²

Having demonstrated the Samaritan belief that Moses was the Word of God, we may now proceed to another subject that is closely related, but presented from a different point of view, namely the form and image of Moses.

4 · THE FORM AND IMAGE OF MOSES

At the risk of some repetition, we bring to an end the study of the state of Moses' earthly being with some further remarks about his form and image, since this is an important element in the whole concept of the cosmic prophet of God.

That image was not just the human image. So the Malef 186:

Moses' form was superior to the usual form of created being; it was visible in his face, his eyes, mouth, hand, heart, in his thought, and in the constancy of his feet. His excellence lay in his perfect state.³

We have noted elsewhere that Moses was possessed in his physical form of the four elements and the image, permeated by the divine light. He possessed that light in a higher degree than ordinary men, since he was 'in the light' in his role of the Word before the creative

¹ Gen. 1.3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28.

² Judaism also has it that the ten words (*fiat*) were pronounced by the Logos. See R. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology*, p. 37.

³ Cf. also Memar Markah, Book II, *passim*, for the classifications of miracles he performed in different parts of his body.

process commenced. Thus his image was impregnated with light at its highest level, next to the ultimate state of God, and this made his image superior to that of other men in a very special way. Ordinary men possessed their image, i.e. their distinctively human manifestation. So did animals possess an image. In his earthly life Moses had the human image, but also the pure light that was to enlighten men. He could not be other than pre-eminent in all things, since his light was radiating more brightly than that of ordinary mortals.

We have no definite knowledge, as has been stated already, of any Samaritan *kenosis* doctrine for Moses, but it is possible that it is implicit in places. Moses, the Samaritan would agree, was subject to some limitations while on earth, even the limitation of a propensity towards sin (Memar Markah V), and in this respect the Samaritan Moses is very different from the Christian's Jesus, though the latter was tempted as other men. Moses did not possess in his physical manifestation *all* light, or even the pure stage of the ultimate light. Restrictions were inevitable when he came within the human environment, and perhaps the greatest restriction was his possession of the image of humanity. We must suppose that when his star entered the firmament of Amram, some degree of *kenosis* took place, but we cannot be categorical about this. The Samaritan thinker, accepting the Gnostic concept of the 'drop of light' reserved by God from the pure light manifesting itself in Moses at his creation, may well have given assent to a *kenosis* doctrine. The difficulty is that we have little in the way of direct statements on the subject. If we base our supposed *kenosis* doctrine on the Samaritan acceptance of 'a drop of light' manifesting itself in Moses, we are at least on reasonable ground. Yet the chief thing we have to bear in mind is that the Samaritan did not really view light as a thing subject to quantitative assessment. The 'drop of light' principle at face value implies a quantitative, and we can criticize the Samaritan thinker for using that Gnostic phrase, if he elsewhere refused to regard the divine light as anything but qualitative, as we have seen in our study of Markah's categories.

Some writers seem to have taken a less critical attitude than we might have expected them to take. Even Ben Manir, one of the foremost thinkers of the great period of religious reformation in mediaeval Samaritanism, speaks of Moses' image being 'clothed with light' at the Sinai theophany, as if it were not clothed with light at all times. Here we may have the answer to the problem of the

quantitative and the qualitative, for Ben Manir may well have been thinking there and in other passages that Moses' light *could* only manifest itself *in the world* at a lesser degree of manifestation, but in the circumstances of such a supernormal event as the Sinai theophany, where Moses was involved in non-physical circumstances, his light was able to manifest itself at its full degree, so that his image radiated with the light that was normally subdued in radiance by the limitations imposed by life in the lower world.

It has already been noted that the image is most manifest in the face. Indeed the Samaritan Arabic translation of the word for image (*zalma*, *zelem*) is *wajh*, face. This was not to identify image with face, for elsewhere we see that the face is but the clearest manifestation of the light-permeated image of a man. So Moses' face shone with the pure light that manifested itself in the great Sinai experience with God. Moses was with God there; the supreme light impregnated his image and it radiated the pure light, but men could not face its brightness. The radiant nature of supernormal beings is a notion not unfamiliar to students of the New Testament, where we read of angels (and Jesus) being clothed with brilliant light. The concept of such brilliant radiance for supernormal beings was not confined to the Samaritans, but they had developed a system of classification and categorization that fitted within the wider framework of their cosmic scheme.

What exactly is the image that manifests itself most clearly in the human face, in a man's expression? There is no detailed description available from Samaritan sources, but we have a description by a famous Judaist philosopher with which the Samaritans would undoubtedly agree, judging from the general tenor of their ideas about it. It is the statement of Maimonides (1135-1204) in his *Moreh Nebukhim* (*Guide for the Perplexed*):

The term *zelem*¹ signifies the specific form, *viz.* that which constitutes the essence of a thing, whereby the thing is what it is; the reality of a thing in so far as it is that particular thing. In man this 'form' is that constituent which gives him human perception.²

Thus the image in man could receive light, and we have said elsewhere that Moses' light gave light to men, providing them with illumination in their darkness. So the image could be 'clothed' with light, as Ben Manir states (C. p. 650). Yet another aspect of the

¹ I.e. *zelem*, as in Samaritan usage.

² Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, ed. M. Friedländer, p. 13.

subject is thrown into relief by Ben Manir's statement that 'the image (*zelem*) of the tabernacle was in his mind'. Moses, it was believed, experienced on Sinai an actual vision of the real world¹ and all that it contained, for he dwelt with the angels and supped with them. Thus throughout his earthly life he was possessed of that image.

Now the Samaritans clearly do not mean by 'image' here a remembered picture. There are many passages in the didactic writings that make it clear that what he saw was the other than three-dimensional reality of it, if we may use such an expression. In other words, he saw what was the true atomic reality and not the limited dimension of it. To carry this concept to its conclusion, the human image should be regarded in this light, so that in the world it is not the manifestation of the real image, which belongs in its full manifestation to the upper or 'other' world. Plato would have approved of this view and no doubt the Samaritans derived it from Neo-Platonic sources.

We cannot say more than we have said on the basis of available sources, else we would be speculating too much. Before we turn to Moses' relationship to God in wider terms, let us briefly summarize. Moses existed before the beginning in some form without image, in which state he was with God and of God, though not identified with God. Once the divine will had expressed itself and the wisdom of God had ordered what was to be, the divine power through the Word brought all into being. Moses received his image at the time of his being created an entity. That image was not subject to limitation until Moses 'descended' into the three-dimensional world, when it became limited, whether because the pure light could not manifest itself at its highest degree in physical conditions or not we cannot be certain. But in the supernormal situation obtaining at Sinai his image was clothed (permeated) with the true light at its highest manifestation. Thus Moses, restricted by human environment, could in certain circumstances become what he really and eternally was. We may not be far from the truth if we refer this experience to the Transfiguration narrative of Christ, who likewise was 'garbed with light', in the Semitic figure, on the top of a mountain, but this we shall have to leave to the appropriate moment in our examination.

¹ The biblical warrant is Ex. 25.40.

VII

MOSES AND GOD

He who believes in Moses believes in his Lord.¹

THE QUOTATION SETS the pattern for our study of the relationship between God and Moses. That such a statement could be made as early as the time of Markah shows us how far Samaritan theology had developed in those early times, for there is nothing explicit in the Pentateuch that could explain such a far-reaching belief. Ex. 4.5 may implicitly suggest the germ of such belief, but the developed form that we encounter in the liturgies stresses belief in the *person* of Moses, and not only in the miracles wrought by his hand. We may assume that the Samaritans found it possible to accept what may well have come from New Testament influence simply because the idea of such an association between God and Moses could find some warrant in their sacred book.

Much of Samaritan thinking about the unique and indeed supernatural relationship thus established as a belief is expressed in terms of the events on Mount Sinai, where Moses, we learn from the Bible, was with God. In what sense he was *with* God need not concern us at this juncture, but as interpreted by a number of writers the theophany on Mount Sinai gave proof of much that was believed about Moses on other grounds. The event was not only a signal one because it was the occasion for the giving of the all-important Law; it was a cosmic event in that Moses 'went up' to God and received confirmation of his mission, as well as experiencing many revelations and seeing the real form of what on earth is unreal. The more mystical accounts of the event conceive of an entry by Moses into the upper world, where he actually dwelt with the angels and learned their secret knowledge.

In many of their accounts we find one thing stressed over and over

¹ Liturgy, *passim*.

again. That is that when God and Moses were in communication (or communion)

No third person was between them.¹

What did the Samaritans understand by the relationship between the incorporeal deity and the substantial or physical Moses? Did not the Law state that Moses spoke with God mouth to mouth (Num. 12.8)? Did not the Lord speak to Moses face to face (Ex. 33.11)? The Liturgy has dozens if not scores of quotations of these verses. They were of considerable importance to the Samaritan understanding of the role of Moses on earth. It is clear that the best of the Samaritan philosophers believed that no physical contact was meant.² They held that Moses could, on such an occasion, be 'other' than his human self, because he (the person) was the Man of God and because the true atmosphere obtaining on the mountain was not a material one made up of the elements. The cloud atop the mount was not a gaseous mass, but really a veil separating the visible world from the invisible. Moses penetrated that cloud or veil and entered into the upper world where existed the true pattern of all things on earth.³

Some indication of earlier development of the subject is found in Markah's bold statement that

The great prophet Moses ascended to the level of the Divine One⁴ and was honoured on Mount Sinai (C. p. 877.23).

The relationship between the deity and Moses can only be understood if we remember that the pre-existent Moses was with God before creation. Although he was of God as light, his manifestation as a human being, albeit a predestined thing, was subject to restriction, except on such an occasion as the Sinai theophany, the giving of the Law being an occasion when he retained his role of Logos. Moses on earth was a man, but he was not only pre-eminent among men; he was God's Man! He acted for God and conveyed the divine will to the lower world.

As son of God's House, though never the son of God in any Christian sense, he was specially endowed with divine powers. Markah explains this very fully in Book I of his *Memar*, where we learn that

¹ Liturgy, *passim*.

² So Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 53.

³ After Ex. 25.40.

⁴ Or 'divinity'.

the superhuman endurance and power of Moses derived its strength from God.

Let your hands be resolute and let them be honourable, for their resoluteness lies in me, a resoluteness greater than anything in the world. Let your heart be exceedingly bold! Let it not sink, for its direction, just like that of the sun and moon, is in me.

Make your tongue bold! Let silence never be near it, for its power, just like that of the waves of the sea, lies in me.

Open up your ears and I will fill them with understanding, for the opening of them lies in me, just like the opening of the Waste and Void.

Markah follows the distinctive outlook of the E document of the Pentateuch in ascribing innate superhuman powers to Moses. Where the older J document would attribute the actual doing of a miracle to God himself (after Moses had stretched forth his rod), the E document preferred to speak of Moses himself being responsible for the actual performance of the miracle. So Markah placed these extraordinary powers in Moses. After all, Moses' earthly life was not only predestined; it was part and parcel of the whole cosmic scheme of creation. The son of God's House was in every way the *modus operandi* of God's will in the human situation. God conveyed his will to Moses, not through the intermediaries, the angels, as in the case of the Patriarchs, but directly, and Moses carried out that will. The powers innate in him were used by him in the expression of God and in the execution of the divine will.

Just as he was the Logos of God in his pre-existent state and, as we shall see, he was to be the spokesman for all mankind in the after-life, so on earth he was God's spokesman to Israel and Israel's spokesman before God. When Moses spoke to Israel and addressed to them God's commands as revealed to him by God, it was not simply the voice of a superior human being that spoke; it was ultimately the voice of God in his Man. Markah expresses the matter in the human situation in a way that is distinctly reminiscent of the New Testament.

Your speech is the speech of God and he is the (actual) doer of all that you have manifested (Memar VI.4).

With this statement we may compare two Johannine statements:

The teaching that I give is not my own; it is the teaching of him who sent me (John 7.16).

For as the Father has life-giving power in himself, so has the Son, by the Father's gift (John 5.26).

Markah differs from St John in thinking of the power in Moses as something inherent in his role, as innate in the cosmic being who is eternally the spokesman of God. There is no suggestion in Samaritan teaching that Moses' powers were a gift from God.

Not only did Moses have the power of God for the purpose of doing the will of God; he had special knowledge of God's will in *his own mind*. Again, this is not something that has been given to him as 'a gift' from God, but something inherent in his function as Logos.¹ From creation he possessed God's will in himself. Abdallah's great hymn in the Tabernacles Liturgy teaches that

Moses walked in the knowledge of God. From the day of man's creation his will has been in this child and his existence has been in the world (C. p. 747.31).

Abdallah was writing about the birth of Moses and elsewhere he speaks of Moses' mother having special understanding of her infant's unique role, 'but keeping her thoughts to herself' in the New Testament manner.²

Abdallah expresses exactly what Markah had thought a thousand years before.

The Samaritan religious writers never wearied of speaking of Moses' possession of the divine will, and even more so they stressed Moses' supreme ability to expound that will in the historical situation. He did more than merely receive revelations, more than merely act as go-between in the handing over of the laws at Sinai. He was specially endowed as God's 'spokesman' with the faculty for interpreting that will, for at Sinai he not only received the laws as we have them in the Pentateuch; he received also much teaching directly from God, and it seems more than likely that the Samaritan writers who speak of this 'secret teaching' were influenced, no doubt quite unconsciously, by the Christian teaching about the Transfiguration of Jesus, when Jesus received confirmation of his role. From the Samaritan point of view, it was at the burning bush that Moses received confirmation of his prophetic mission, and it was at Sinai that he was made to realize the cosmic and eternal signification of the divine instruction. There was a special *gnosis* which was intended for those of mankind who were capable of receiving it. The Pentateuchal

¹ In Rabbinic Judaism there is a tradition that Wisdom was God's co-worker in the creative process; hence it was a variant of the Logos concept, derived from Prov. 8; R. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology*, p. 36.

² Luke 2.19.

laws had application for all men, but the special teaching about the 'real' world and the Day of Judgement was for the few. We have here a kind of 'master and disciple' order, for throughout Samaritan philosophical writings there is developed the theme that the true seeker, the contemplator, can commune with the spirit of Moses and derive superior knowledge from him.

What is the nature of this special knowledge with which Moses was endowed at Sinai? It was cosmic in its application, for God spoke to him of the history of the elect people and taught him how he had rescued the Patriarchs from calamity, from time immemorial, in order to preserve the line of the pure ones for the evolution of man's comprehension of his will in history. The meaning of current events was explained and the purpose underlining recent happenings was made clear. Following from this, God revealed to Moses what was yet to come. While he was 'beyond the veil' and actually situate in the 'unseen', Moses saw the pattern of all things to come. Moses was shown the Garden of Eden, the blissful state for the righteous after the end of the judgement; he was shown the true worship and service of God as it would be performed in the ideal community to be. He saw what form the Day of Judgement would take.

Ab Gelugah in the twelfth century follows the thought of earlier writers when he states:

Moses . . . whom thou didst entrust with things hidden and things revealed, and to whom thou didst give knowledge of secret things, some new, some ancient . . . (C. p. 77.19).

Moses was entrusted with a sacred task and a sacred knowledge given to no other. Perhaps still more emphatic is the Samaritan stress on one other miraculous aspect of the person of Moses on earth. He was vested with the divine name. There is considerable doubt yet as to what the Samaritans thought the signification of this to be. Before trying to explain the phenomenon, let us take note of some typical statements:

O thou who hast vested me with thy name, by which thou didst create the world.

O thou who didst reveal to me thy great name (Memar Markah IV.7).

Many writers stress the relationship between Moses' name and the divine one, perhaps in their endeavour to elucidate in their own mind the relationship between the man called Moses and the divine one *with* whom he belonged in his other-wordly state. To this end they

pointed to the fact that Moses' name in Hebrew (the consonants are M Š H) was the same as the *word* for the name of God, but in a different order (the consonants of the word for 'name' being Š M H). We cannot enter here into the kabbalistic significance of this, but we may note the attempt and the motivating principle.

Within the liturgical context one of the chief elements in the praise of Moses is the fact that he was 'vested' with the divine name. In other contexts where Moses is being compared with his brother Aaron the priest, it is often the possession of the divine name that is regarded as the chief differentiating factor. Abdallah puts it thus:

Moses was wiser than his brother in the secrets of the great name (C. p. 309.26).

Aaron had of course received the 'great name' from Moses, but it was Moses who knew the real mystery behind the eternal name, the very secret of creation itself. In another sense, only Moses could know the ultimate signification of the name, because he was the one who pronounced the divine *fiat* when he was in his upper-worldly state.

We may yet ask if there was any influence from outside sources that enabled the Samaritans to develop this idea. Certainly there was biblical warrant (in Ex. 3 for a start) for the notion that Moses in a unique and incomparable way received the revelation of the name, but there is hardly enough there to account for the tremendous mystical emphasis placed upon it. There is indeed a Christian parallel (as well as many Judaist ones of unknown age) and it is from St Paul's writings that we may well find the stimulus that enabled the Samaritans, as so often, to develop something inherent or incipient in their sacred scripture. We turn to the Epistle to the Philippians for an exact parallel to the thought of Moses being vested with the divine name.

Therefore God raised him to the heights and *bestowed on him the name above all names*, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—in heaven, on earth, and in the depths—and every tongue confess, 'Jesus Christ is Lord', to the glory of God the Father (2.9-11).

If we substitute for Jesus and Jesus Christ the name of the Samaritan 'christ', then we have something that would be wholly acceptable to the Samaritan (apart from the ascription of fatherhood to God, of course). Moses too was 'raised up' and elevated to the highest degree; he received the name supreme. In the Markah narrative of

the call and commission of Moses it is stated that it was because he could declare the name of God to the elders of Israel that they would *believe in him* and in his mission from God. As for the status of Moses thus vested, there are many scores of statements in Markah's writings and in the writings of the mediaeval philosophers about the cosmic signification of this 'vestment'. Heaven and earth bowed down before him, and as we shall observe when we discuss the death and assumption of the cosmic Moses, every natural phenomenon, heaven and earth and all the host of heaven, glorified the ascending Man of God. God is thus glorified through the glorification of Moses, and the angels are there to praise the God of Moses.

Another feature of the relationship between God and Moses is the fact that God 'conveys' life to the world through him. There are two distinct senses in which the Samaritans explain this. One is that as Moses announced creation and to a degree higher than that of the light of the sun sustains it through his light, so his existence in the world ensures the continuing light of the world. His light radiates over the whole world and sustains and inspires all men who are witness to his light. This is chiefly developed into a belief in mediaeval times, but all the elements exist in the writings of Markah.

The other sense is one that can be called in a phrase the 'direct method'. According to a typical statement found in the writings of Amram Darah in the Defter:

Thou didst deliver the tablets of the covenant to the son of thy House, to bring life from the Lord of all life (C. p. 32.9).

According to one interpretation this refers to the handing over of the two stone tablets of the Law bringing renewed light to the believer in God. Another interpretation is that Moses was the medium whereby life in the spiritual sense was conveyed to men, not necessarily through the Law, but through the divine light shining in Moses into the hearts of the faithful, for Moses' image was the supreme form after which comes the form and nature of all men.

This appears to be the thought of John 1.4, where we read:

All that came to be was alive with his life, and that life was the light of¹ men.

We can well understand after these discussions that Moses in his earthly life 'reflected' the will of God. His function was to 'represent'

¹ In Semitic terms the light *in* men.

God among men and to reveal the light in himself, that all men might see it and that their light might shine more brightly.

One further aspect of Moses' status on earth that has briefly been alluded to in connection with the Sinai theophany is something that will again take us into the atmosphere and teaching of the New Testament. Moses, it is said, was ministered to by angels (cf. Mark 1.13, etc.). The glory was his companion; the hosts of the Holy One were his friends and admirers. He alone of men could abide in the presence of the glory. He was superior to the angels, and indeed he received their aid on certain occasions of cosmic signification. Abdallah b. Berakhah (sixteenth century) referred to the Day of Maḥratha¹ as

A day in which the myriad angels were in his (Moses') service (C. p. 345.14).

¹ The liturgical order for the worship of this day is contained in C. pp. 335-370. It is primarily a festival for the reading of the Law.

VIII

THE LIFE AND WORK OF MOSES

I · HIS BIRTH

The connection between the pre-existent state and that in the flesh was mediated by a species of metempsychosis, the sacred germ of divine light being transmitted through his forebears until it fully incarnated itself in the prophet.¹

THE OVERWHELMING NUMBER of references to and accounts of the birth of Moses in the liturgies and in various mediaeval works seems to accord well with the fact that in the Pentateuch the story of his birth and parentage comes from the E tradition. It is generally agreed, though not in matters of detail, that the J stratum of the Pentateuch began its account of Moses' life only from his sojourn as a fugitive in Midian. The E document is the chief source for the biblical account of Moses' descent from the sons of Levi, the priestly house. The P document gives little more than its usual genealogical and chronological notices, although naturally it is especially interested in the family tree of Moses.

Aaron, who is linked with Moses in the earliest Samaritan traditions in a very special way, appears with Moses in the E account of the family of Amram and Jochebed. Just as the E stratum of the Pentateuch is interested in the Egyptian background of Moses, so Markah's Memar, Book I, seems well versed in Egyptian matters, and that book gives an account of the plagues which follows the E account closely to the partial exclusion of J and P.

The revelation of God to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3) is the starting point for the earliest known Samaritan tradition and teaching about Moses; it is chiefly in the mediaeval material that the birth by supernormal means is emphasized. In the fourteenth-century liturgical material we read of the developed tradition about the birth which appears in various forms, but it is, broadly

¹ Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 228, as quoted above.

speaking, dependent to a considerable extent on the Christian nativity story.

It seems fairly certain that the New Testament comparisons between Moses and Jesus¹ which seem to lead to the New Testament belief that Jesus was, as it were, a greater Moses, encouraged the Samaritans, who were after all the first corporate body within a specific community to recognize the Messianic claims attributed to Christ (John 4.39f.), in their development of their doctrine of Moses. It is also true that there were many traditions about Moses current throughout the Roman period in Palestine, many of which appear in the works of various Judaist historians. The Judaist Targums and various collections of Judaist traditions and legends, as well as pseudepigraphical works such as *The Assumption of Moses*, provide evidence of the popularity of such traditions in the centuries leading up to the time of Markah. That the Samaritans may have known not only the New Testament, but some of the literature of the Judaist tradition as well, is shown for instance by the similarity between the mediaeval account of the discovery by Pharaoh's daughter of the infant Moses, whereupon she was cured of a disease on beholding his radiance, and the account mentioned by Josephus.² It is possible that this legend belongs to a period anterior to both Josephus and the Samaritan traditions.³

Thus in the late Roman period there were many speculations on the theological side—inevitably—about the true nature of Moses, especially once Christianity had become established in the Roman Empire. The Samaritans obviously knew the Christian position well and were acquainted with the comparisons made between Moses and Jesus. They were bound to react in their own defence, as they had to do in other matters. In respect of the status of Moses they were primarily indebted for the development of their doctrine to the Christians. How early this indebtedness began it is not possible to say; we have noted that a Christian bishop from Shechem attended the important Council of Nicaea in 325, and therefore the Samaritans of that fairly small community would have been well versed in the Christian controversies about the person (and hence the birth) of Christ. We have little or no information about the relationship

¹ E.g. John 1.17; Heb. 3.5f.

² *Antiquities* ii. 9, 10.

³ Cf. also the infancy legend of the four guardian angels in charge of the infant Moses recorded in *Bibliotheca Samaritana*, II, no. 14 (Het), quoted by Montgomery, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

between Samaritans and Christians as far as the tradition of the birth of Moses is concerned.¹

The doctrine of the birth of Moses may not have developed, however, till after Markah's time. There is no Defter tradition other than the biblical. By the mediaeval era, as we shall see, a supernormal birth for Moses was being considered by some Samaritans.

In the discussion on the light created by God and 'reserved' as a 'drop' or 'spark' in man, radiating in the lives of the righteous, we learn that that light manifested itself most fully and in a consummate way in the earthly life and person of Moses. There came a time within the designed plan of the Creator when 'his Man' should enter the material world and act as saviour of his people after he had communicated to them the will and message of God.

This materialization of the light of the pre-existent Moses takes the form in mediaeval tradition of astrological symbolism. Throughout the liturgies the process is mentioned, with variant descriptions, but the overall tradition is clear. There are two forms of the tradition, however, which seem to complement each other *vis-à-vis* the Christian nativity story. The first seems to have derived from Gnostic speculations and the second appears as a direct incorporation, with modifications, of the nativity stories in the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke. In both versions, nevertheless, the Prologue of St John's Gospel is in the background and indeed supplied the *modus operandi* of the whole.

The first tradition, set out in astrological terminology, states that the light of Moses

Shone in the firmament of Amram and ascended into the womb of Jochebed (C. p. 747.20).

An extension of the same occurs also in the Tabernacles Liturgy, where we read:

A light shone in the firmament of Amram and reached into the womb of Jochebed; it descended within her and spread out over the earth (C. p. 743.24-26).

Here we have the additional element that the light (Moses) is pre-ordained to 'overship' of the House of God, which reminds one of the principle already established in the Old Testament.²

¹ For further Judaist traditions see Bab. Talmud: Sotah 12 a/b. Cf. also Pirke Rabbi Eliezer, p. 378. The full Samaritan story is contained in the Commentary on the Asatir, Gaster, *The Asatir*, p. 253.

² Cf. Jer. 1.5.

The first quotation above is otherwise expressed in the following:

God established him as a drop of light, drop by drop to Amram (by posterity); from there he descended into the womb of Jochebed and was implanted in her (C. p. 747.32-33).

The process, as conceived by the Samaritans, of the transmission of the drop of light is discussed elsewhere, and it is sufficient for us to observe here that Moses was pre-ordained, throughout the history of his ancestors in a special way, and indeed was 'as light' created before his forefathers!

The Malef (139) does not deal with the subject in astrological terms, but the light *motif* is still prominent:

Moses' birth took place in shining light and a beautiful scene.¹

It is interesting to note that the astrological *motif* is found in the Malef in connection with the birth of Noah:

There was seen at the time of his birth a great sign in the midst of the heavens (62).

The process following the lodgement of the light in the womb of Jochebed will be described after we have noted the alternative tradition. According to this, when God decided on the departure of his Man earthward, he sent an angel to Amram (cf. Matt. 1.20) and the angel informed Amram as follows:

Rise now and go in to Jochebed, but do not be afraid of the people of the land, lest they fail to accept your explanation (cf. Matt. 1.19).

Amram went obediently, i.e. by the will of the spirit, not of the flesh (cf. John 1.13). The angel was present with Amram during the intercourse with Jochebed—which is in clear contradistinction to the statement of Matt. 1.24, where it is expressly stated that Joseph had no intercourse with Mary until after Jesus was born. In the Samaritan tradition, then, as a result of the divine will and human compliance, the wife of Amram bore a son, to be called *The Man* (Aramaic 'son of man'). The angel, we are told, 'ministered to him wondrously' and comforted the mother with secret counsel. She kept his words to herself (so Luke 2.19). The remainder of the narrative is compressed and we are next informed that the hostile people wearied of questioning Amram, while Jochebed placed her trust in God. She concealed her babe for three months, but was unable to conceal him longer.

¹ For the similar Judaist tradition, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* II, pp. 236f.

There is no material available to inform us what the Samaritan tradition intended by the questioning by the hostile people, but we may assume that it was either brought about by the fact that Amram 'went in' to Jochebed at all, or the writer has given a garbled version of the New Testament account; after avoiding the claim of a virgin birth for Moses (because there was human intercourse), he left part of the Christian tradition in his account, where he would have been better to have left it out.

Returning now to the first tradition, which is better attested, we learn that Moses was 'born in peace' (cf. Luke 2.14) and the light from the pure light of God shone forth and abode on the face of his mother, so that she became, as it were, clad with light, the holy light on her face. This statement at once brings to mind so many traditional Christian pictures of the mother of Jesus surrounded by a halo of light.

When the babe was finally born, the light radiated from within him and he 'received glory for his preservation'. The receipt of glory may reflect the New Testament imagery of the adoration of the baby Jesus. The tradition goes on to state that from the light appeared

The evangel creating gladness for all generations.

This seems to mean that the 'good news' (gospel) was manifested from Moses' inward light (cf. Luke 2.32).

Vague references appear in several mediaeval poems to the star of Moses. We have already noted the attribution to him of the title 'Star', but there is another connection in which we read of the 'star of Moses' appearing at the time of his birth. Whether this was intended to mean the same thing as his light manifesting itself or whether it was meant in the sense that an actual star appeared in the sky is uncertain. It would seem from some poems that his star actually did appear in astrological terms (or even astronomical ones!). One such poem speaks of both star and light. This is from the pen of Abraham b. Jacob in the Day of Atonement hymnal:

When his star appeared and the glory of his light was seen, the holy hosts . . . greeted him. He was born from the womb of Jochebed and his light radiated . . . (C. p. 705.23-25).

The order of these remarks seems to suggest that the Christian tradition of the nativity of Christ was known to the mediaeval writers—and why not? The great history which is called herein Chronicle II

records certain events in the life of Christ, and further records the Christian literature of the first two centuries, Gospels canonical and uncanonical. Certainly Samaritan information about Christianity was well established in early times and it need occasion us no surprise that the mediaeval writers should know of the 'Star of Bethlehem' and find it possible to relate it to their own belief about the light of Moses.

It became customary in Samaritan teaching about Moses to regard him as a 'seventh-month baby'. Abdallah b. Solomon may well have been influenced here by the ancient tradition that seventh-month babies were extraordinary in some way. We have such beliefs from ancient Greece, from which we learn that Dionysus and Apollo were seventh-month babies and had divine powers given them.

Abdallah, like other writers, stresses the rejoicing among the angels at his birth. The New Testament 'multitude of the heavenly host' (Luke 2.13) is matched by two passages of his:

And the day of his birth was celebrated with rejoicing among the angels. The glory was his companion and the hosts of the Holy One were in their places.

For further details of the angelic activity at the birth we turn back to the Tabernacles Liturgy (C. p. 747) to learn that the babe was born in the seventh month, on the seventh day, at the seventh hour, and that he was born into a supernormal (cosmic) scene distinctly reminiscent of the Gospel story. The occasion was fully cosmic, as the Samaritans understand this concept, for the rejoicing of the angels did not take place only on earth, but

Rejoicing reached from the very heavens down to earth.

The cosmic significance for the Samaritans led the writer to say:

The fire which was over the face of the heavens . . . said, 'All glory has come in the advent of this child.'

The powers of the unseen world each gave good tidings to its companion, 'The Man of God has arrived! He has come to reveal the truth according to the command of the Lord.'

Moses, righteous in deed and word, has come! The perfection of creation has come, whom his Lord knows!

The most faithful in the House of God in the seen and in the unseen has come!

The revealer of faith, whom our Lord has sent, has come!

The lawbringer . . . has come! The prophet of God . . . has come!

The most select of creation has come from the invisible world!

The teacher of life, whom the Holy One honours, has come!

He who is clothed in a ray of light has come!

In another stanza of his poem (C. p. 743) the writer states that the angels, or holy ones, minister to him.

That the mediaeval Samaritan tradition of the birth of Moses is substantially the Christian nativity story is thus abundantly clear, and we shall see that the additions made by the Samaritans, however subconsciously and gradually they accepted them, are in conformity with the normal attributes of Moses. However, that there is in addition to the above account an even greater dependence on the narratives of Luke 2 and Matthew 2 is illustrated from another hymn by Abdallah from the Seventh Month Liturgy. It is in that liturgy precisely that we might expect a full description of the birth of the child of the seventh month. Yet in this hymn Abdallah does not recount all of the tradition as set out above. He does, on the other hand, give us extremely close parallels to the nativity stories of Matthew and Luke. For example:

The glory (shone) for him; the glorious night had come (cf. Luke 2.9).
In addition to this further detail that the birth took place at night as did Jesus', we have a crop of details from Matt. 1, 2.

Both below and above was he created (cf. Matt. 1.18).

According to his direction was Moses born (cf. 1.22).

He is addressed as 'sun' (cf. 2.3).

They knew not about his birth, only that his light was shining (cf. 2.2).
Pharaoh enquired that sorcerers should tell him where the child was (cf. 2.4).

The light of him was shining and it came to where Pharaoh was (cf. 2.9).

The slaying of the firstborn males is mentioned (cf. 2.16). The reference in Abdallah's hymn to God's bringing out the elect corresponds to Matthew's quotation in 2.15.

We can feel confident that as far as the birth of Moses is concerned it was to Christian tradition, not Judaist, that the Samaritans turned, but lying beneath the story thus borrowed is the Gnostic concept of the pure light that God created before the cosmos, the light in which the pre-existent Moses dwelt, just as the earthly Moses was to dwell in the great theophany on Mount Sinai among the angels above.

The first phase of the earthly life of the Samaritan saviour is matched to that of the Christian saviour, a tribute to the Christian position. In many other fields of doctrinal enquiry we are to observe

the same phenomenon of Pentateuchal religion finding its fulfilment in the New Testament. Yet we cannot assume that the Samaritan people were so enraptured by or thrilled at the beauty of the Christian nativity story that they could not help taking possession of it for their own! It is far more likely that centuries of development between the fourth and fourteenth underlay the astonishing appearance in the latter century of so much teaching that is unmistakably Christian in origin. The Pentateuchal warrant of Num. 24.17 and other passages did allow the Samaritans scope for the development of their belief about the advent of Moses. Christian teachers too found Pentateuchal warrant for many of their beliefs about Christ, in the sense that it foretold them. The Samaritans very gradually developed a new sort of biblical exegesis, but it was the superior merit of Christian teaching that drove them back to their own Bible, and there they found more often than not the foundation of what they had unconsciously taken for granted in evolving their own beliefs. We have now looked into the Samaritan advent teaching; we turn now to the mission of Moses in the world.

2 · HIS MISSION

*Glorious is the great prophet Moses, the Saviour of Israel!*¹

There is no need for a re-examination of the life story of Moses from his appearance as a young prince of Egypt as told in the Pentateuch, but it is necessary to look at those aspects of his earthly life that are closely bound up with his cosmic role as 'light of the world' and Word of God.

The Samaritans do not appear to possess any traditions about his earthly life, other than those we have already noted in connection with his birth and those we have yet to examine connected with his death. They were more than content to give thanks for his actions and to ponder over the mysteries implicit in such a life.

As far as the Samaritans are concerned, the appearance of Moses as a young man intervening in a dispute between an Egyptian and a Hebrew indicated his undying concern for his people, the Hebrews, and his later determination to deliver them from the hand of the oppressor. It was no doubt his cosmic sense of mission that led him to take such action before he had been (to his conscious knowledge) called and commissioned to save the elect of God. His deliverance of

¹ Liturgy, *passim*.

his people from darkness and sin contains, as a doctrine, two main elements. One is confined to the historical environment, the other has cosmic signification. We shall briefly note the first and recognize its place within the wider scheme of the second.

According to the J stratum of the Pentateuch the Lord saved Israel from the Egyptians and thus gave proof of his glory as a god of war (Ex. 15.3), a god of victory—this at a time when there was belief in the existence of other gods belonging to other peoples. This account does little more than describe the physical victory of Yahweh over the enemies of his people.

When we examine the northern accounts, especially that of E, we immediately enter into a different environment. The outlook is of a saviour, a Hebrew, commissioned by the deity to deliver his people. Hence God worked through his 'Man'. As we have seen, that saviour Moses in the Samaritan ideology was specially equipped with miraculous powers from God *in himself* in order to bring about the deliverance willed by God. God works within the human sphere through his servant, the one whom he had 'entrusted with his House', in whose hands he had placed the security and safety of his people. The purpose underlying such deliverance is related to the future role of the delivered people as the expressers of God's will within the world of mankind, the outcome being the salvation in time of all peoples, according to some commentators.

The features of the Samaritan tradition based on Ex. 3-14 that stand out clearly as developments out of the E source may be summarized as follows:

(1) The power that produced the miraculous happenings in the story of the Exodus and the Wanderings was innate in Moses, not directly applied by God as in the thought of the southern tradition J. In E, apparently, the rod in Moses' hand was itself believed to possess miraculous powers, but the Samaritans developed by early Christian times a less superstitious outlook on the matter and attributed that power to Moses himself, perhaps as so often as a result of Christian belief about the miraculous powers of Christ.

(2) The wondrous revelation by God of his name was made to Moses and no other. This is greatly stressed in the Samaritan tradition. Thus the High Priest who pronounced that name once a year when he entered the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement was the inheritor of a great mystery from Moses. All the secret knowledge possessed by the High Priests was derived through an unbroken

continuity of transmission from Moses. So it was Moses the Law-giver who taught the secret method of calculating the exact calendar for the performance of the festivals, secret knowledge kept alive only by the succession of High Priests.

(3) We have already observed several times that it is distinctive of Samaritanism to ascribe to Moses a status that could not be received by any other man. This was the E position too, for it is E of the Pentateuchal sources that places Moses on just such a pedestal. Only to Moses were appearances of God granted. As the Samaritans expound this, it was because of the true nature of the spirit of Moses (or his high manifestation of the light) that he could be 'with' God. No other human was possessed of a nature that enabled him to appear before God.

(4) The elevation of Moses made it easy to avoid anthropomorphism in speaking of God. The E document *par excellence* distinguishes itself by its rejection of such descriptions in human terms of the deity. The Samaritans follow this (inherited) attitude throughout their religious writings.

(5) God's revelations of himself to mortals were conveyed by means of dreams and visions, but to Moses by direct mystical union. This was distinctive of E, where the patriarchal dreams and visions were the only means of communication between man and God. We could say, with fairness, that in the Samaritan and in the E tradition God communicated with ordinary men, but he communed with Moses. Communications can involve a medium, whether dream or angel, but communion implies a union of state, an at-onement in spiritual terms.

(6) It has been stated by Pfeiffer¹ that the E story of Moses is a collection of legends leading up to Deut. 34.10 and that there is no real interest in the history of Moses in ordinary terms. This corresponds exactly with what was said at the beginning of this chapter. The Samaritans were really not greatly interested in the ordinary deeds of Moses; they were primarily concerned with those aspects of his life that revealed the divine plan for mankind. The reader who reaches the end of this book will be able to agree with Pfeiffer's remark as it is here also applied to the descendants of the formulators of the E tradition, for Samaritan interest in Moses reaches its zenith with the words of Deut. 34.10. There will never be any like Moses, not in all the world. It was probably because of this belief that they

¹ In his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 175.

conceived the idea, no doubt derived from their 'proof-texts' Deut. 18.15, 18, that if one is to come to prepare the way for God's judgement and restore everything for God, then that person must be *Moses redivivus*, a notion in keeping with a tradition in circulation in intertestamental times and later that the one who would come (to the Judaists the Messiah) would be from the tribe of Levi—like Moses.

(7) The religious history of the elect of God is bound up with two historical personages, Abraham and Moses. So the E position matches the Samaritan interest in Abraham as the progenitor of Israel and in Moses as its saviour.

(8) Pfeiffer¹ lists as a distinctive feature of E the concern for priestly matters, sacred institutions and so on, *at a professional level*. It is undoubtedly true that the Samaritans from earliest times were pre-occupied with the priesthood. Although we shall have to say something about the priesthood in another place, we may observe at this stage that the Samaritan version of the history of Israel consists of a framework of a chronology of High Priests into which is fitted the various historical events that occurred during their lifetime. In contrast to this, the history of Israel in Judaeon and Judaist sources is told in terms of kings, a framework into which various religious matters are fitted.

(9) Pfeiffer, in the same place, speaks of these E factors as 'germs' leading to a theocratic system. That the priesthood of the Samaritans regarded itself as responsible for leading the Israelites to a theocratic world is abundantly clear from many Samaritan sources. In our consideration of the ideal world we shall note the distinctive feature of the theocracy whereby the priesthood would function in its idealistic terms.

(10) Pfeiffer speaks of J's account as 'sculpture', E's account as 'architecture'. Anyone who reads the theology of the Judaists (or even its liturgies) and compares it with that of the Samaritans cannot but agree that the Samaritans have designed their doctrinal system from top to bottom and end to end. There is no corresponding Judaist design.

Having considered the nature of the source upon which the Samaritans base their beliefs about the deliverance of the Hebrew tribes, we now proceed to take note of statements in the literature of the Samaritans themselves.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 176.

Of the several functions of the historical Moses, the soteriological one as applied to the national or corporate body of the people may be assigned first place. Moses was sent by God to save.

Moses, the man who was sent as saviour to Israel (C. p. 726.19-20).

It may be said that there are two main elements in the doctrine of salvation as it bears on Moses. The first concerns the salvation of Israel, the second that of individuals; this is described in terms of the light within all men. This element is concerned with Moses the light of the world that shines on or in all men, aiding them in the progression towards a state of higher awareness of God. In studying what the Samaritans believe about man and about sin, more will be said in Part III about the salvation of the individual along these lines. At this point we have to keep in mind the twofold soteriological role of Moses, the one for the deliverance of the model people, the elect of God, the other for the deliverance of individual men from their own darkness and sin. The one deals with salvation in the traditional religious terms, the other with salvation in the philosophical manner.

Before leaving the subject as it bears on Moses, let us note a vital matter. The first element in the idea of salvation is certainly Samaritanism at its Pentateuchal best; the second reveals Samaritanism at its post-Pentateuchal best under the guiding hand of Christian teaching. As regards the first, which we have said deals with the corporate situation, we read in Markah's Memar how God in Moses manipulated the very elements in order to bring about the deliverance of his people. This is exegesis and interpretation of the Exodus narrative. As regards the second, we have much of the New Testament teaching about Jesus 'the Saviour of the world', but there is considerable difference between the teaching about Moses the saviour of the world and the equivalent Christian teaching about Christ. In the Samaritan position the light that radiated in and from Moses, filled the world with light and entered into the minds (or hearts) of men, enabling them to progress in wisdom in spiritual things, was not primarily the light of a *personal saviour*, as in the case in the Christian teaching; it was the light of God himself, the direct light, the radiant 'outreach' of the one God manifest in his Man. We cannot truly identify the Samaritan attitude to Moses the saviour with the Christian to Jesus. Moses never became a personal saviour, except possibly in the eyes of certain poets of late mediaeval times

who were influenced by Islamic piety. Moses is an inspirer for the contemplative and pious mystic of Samaria, and in a sense he can be said to lead him to a state of salvation, but it would not be right to claim that Moses is his personal redeemer, in the sense that Jesus as a 'person' in the Godhead could be. Moses could never be identified with God in that way, no matter how near the Samaritans seem at times to come to that position.

3 · THE LAWGIVER

*The name of God is at the beginning of the Law and the name of Moses is at the end of it.*¹

Closely connected with Moses' role of saviour of Israel is his role of lawgiver. Possession of the Law was to the pious Samaritan as a key to the gateway of truth. We shall study the belief about the place of the Law in life, its source, its demands, its efficacy and so on in the chapter on the means of grace. Here we are content to examine Moses' role of lawgiver in order to supply one more fundamental aspect of the life of the historical Man of God.

It is at once obvious to all students of the Pentateuch that to call Moses 'lawgiver' would be a natural enough expression in view of what the Pentateuch records of the life of Moses. In Judaist literature of many periods one finds this title likewise applied, but again we have to realize that there may have been external influences on the Samaritans, for, as far as this title of Moses is concerned, it is emphasized greatly and used in many contexts closely associated with Moses the saviour. This connection, so frequent in expressions of praise to God for his Man in the Liturgy, is found once in the same direct manner in the New Testament, where in James 4.12 we read:

There is only one lawgiver and judge, the One who is able to save life and destroy it.

The expression 'to save life and to destroy it'² referring to God, is a favourite Samaritan expression too, and it occurs in a multitude of passages in the Liturgy and commentaries. This is certainly not to say that the Samaritan stress is dependent directly on the New Testament usage, but in view of the transparent Christian influence on Samaritan thought in so many other instances we may note the parallelism here too, without making overmuch of it.

¹ C. p. 873.21. The quotation refers to Gen. 1.1 and Deut. 34.12.

² After Deut. 32.39.

Markah regarded the attribute of Lawgiver in a special way. In his Memar in a list of such titles he states:

The lawgiver of the world, [a title] which informs us that he is unique, the like of whom has not arisen and never will arise (VI.6).

This is the only title in his list regarding which he emphasizes the uniqueness of Moses in this way, although in the others he stresses his pre-eminence. Here he stresses the absolute status of Moses as the only one who could possess such a title. The stress is that of James referring to God. In our special chapter on 'Moses and Christ' at the end of the book we shall find so many close and obvious parallels between the two figures in the respective religious systems that we shall not have to be highly imaginative to compare Markah's thought with that of James.

Various other titles of Moses that have bearing on the nature of Moses' role of lawgiver exist. One of these is 'master of knowledge', a phrase often connected with (a) his pre-existent state as Word of God, and (b) the special mystical knowledge he acquired at his call and commission and at the theophany on Mount Sinai. The source of his knowledge of the laws of God is everywhere stated to be celestial. He did not merely receive them in the manner of an amanuensis and pass them on as a servant obedient to his master; he was not simply inspired in the way that, say, Muhammad in Islamic thought was by an angel. Moses, it is held, was *with* God before his advent into the world, and *before* God (almost in the ancient Israelite cultic sense) on Mount Sinai. As we have already indicated, he derived full realization of his mission in a way similar to that of Jesus on the mountain of Transfiguration.

In a sense, the Word of God incarnate receives and conveys the instruction of God. Moses the lawgiver is still the Spokesman or Logos in his incarnate state. We have noted that the Logos at creation pronounced the 'Ten Words' of Gen. 1 and that there are two other sets of 'Ten Words' pronounced by Moses. The Logos as Spokesman received the Ten Words, the Decalogue (Ex. 20), on Mount Sinai. However, Moses as lawgiver does much more than convey to Israel the Ten Words; he expounds them into an expanded corpus of laws, now called Torah (teaching). It is fitting, strangely enough, to think of this corpus as Moses' legislation, in its expanded form, rather than God's directly, for Moses had the capacity as incarnate Logos to proclaim what was to be. Not only so, but he had seen the real pattern of things (Ex. 25.40) past, present

and future. The Logos thereafter pronounced the 'word of God' as one with special knowledge himself of the world in which he had become incarnate.

Many works of the mediaeval period deal with the special source of knowledge that can be received through mystical contemplation of Moses and his Law. There is a certain similarity between this sort of knowledge in the way it is received and that derived by the mystics of the Eastern Syrian Church.¹ Mystical knowledge to the Samaritan is different from the Pauline concept of 'knowledge' through what is termed faith. The Samaritan received his inspiration direct from the chain of transmission through the light of the heavenly Moses. Such a man was a member of a pure chain (for which subject see further Chapter XIV, Section 1), which kept alive through the performance of the faithful life the special knowledge that could be revealed or rather manifested in the mind of those capable of receiving it. Such men were men who had manifested in their spiritual evolution such a degree of the light that they became sensitive to that other source of knowledge that transcended normal media for the receipt of knowledge.

Following the biblical account, we have the fully expanded Samaritan account of the revelation in religious terminology often expressed thus:

Thy glorious autograph he received in glory—right from the days of creation (*Liturgy, passim*).

Other passages, even more traditional in their setting, speak of the transmission of the Law direct from the right hand of God to the right hand of Moses, an anthropomorphism that is allowable by a religious system that has purified itself of anthropomorphism, because it is no more than a metaphor for direct transmission. It is this directness of the transmission that is the subject of such emphasis. There was no third between God and Moses, not at Sinai, not at any time. God and Moses were bound together in that the latter is but the *agens* of the former and the only possible *agens* at that.

In the Durrani another aspect of the conveying of the Law is expressed, to the effect that

The scriptures in the divine autograph were entrusted to Moses for ever (C. p. 39.3-4).

¹ See, e.g. the valuable article by G. Widengren, 'Researches in Syrian Mysticism: Mystical experiences and spiritual exercises', in *Numen* VIII.3, December 1961, pp. 161-98.

It is to be noted in the last two quotations that there is an eternal significance in the transmission of the divine Law. In the former we learn that Moses always possessed it, i.e. Moses the eternal light of God, Moses the eternal Word, where in traditional religious language based on the Pentateuch it is enough to speak of the historical, human figure of Moses 'receiving' them; in the latter we learn that the transmission has no temporal limit—the receipt and possession of the Law are eternally valid.

On the whole, Samaritan teaching about Moses and the Law is specific, but it is in Markah's writings that we are given the first systematic statement. The passage now quoted from Book IV of the Memar reveals the Samaritan view of what it was that Moses conveyed to the Israelites.

Exalted be the faithful prophet Moses, the Man of God, who taught us what God had taught him. He taught us life and warned us of death. He set us on the True One (or 'truth') and covenanted us with him. He taught us about lying and warned us against it. He led us in the way of salvation and removed us far from the way of destruction. Let us listen to his words, for there is life in them! Let us keep them, for there is preservation in them! His words are like medicine which cures all who are sick. Affliction will not come near to those who partake of it, *for I am the Lord, your healer* (Ex. 15.26).

Concern with the detailed carrying out of the precepts of the Law is never lacking among the Samaritans, for that is what their name (Samaritans=Keepers) signifies, but the whole purpose of the Law as they conceived it lies within the sphere of salvation, not spiritual and moral discipline alone. God's purpose in revealing his will through Moses was to save and to heal. Moses the lawgiver is thus frequently described as 'the lawgiver who saves his people' (cf. James 4.12).

Some graphic descriptions of the process of transmission exist in the oldest part of the Liturgy, which may be dated to the third or fourth century AD, and these we have kept to the end as they serve merely to describe for us in pictorial language how the Samaritan worshipper was accustomed to speak and think of the scriptures. The passage now quoted is from the pen of Markah (*passim*); we consult only those parts of his Defter and Memar writings that refer directly to the part played by Moses. The philosophical and metaphysical significance we shall reserve for the chapter on the means of grace.

This is the great Scripture that the mighty prophet received from the right hand of the mighty King.

This is the harvest of his treasury, decrees, laws and statutes. Where has anyone ever seen such a treasure store as this?

As for Mount Sinai, the holy meeting point, it was there that God made proclamation, when the mighty prophet heard and taught.

The heavenly angels came down to see . . . when he descended to reveal it.

Great, mighty wonders were manifested on Mount Sinai. God handed over and Moses received.

Angels and mortals together were seen on the top of Mount Sinai, when the prophet hearkened and (thereafter) taught the generations.

At the gates of heaven, when they were opened, God handed over to Moses the two tablets of the covenant.

Bow down before the Scripture with sincerity, for he who bows down before it worships God.

There is none so true as the Giver and there is no prophet like the one who copied out the Law.

The Sinai theophany is told and retold in terms that graphically portray the cosmic connotation of the facts recorded in the Law. In writing for his Memar, Markah normally emphasized the ethical import of that great event within its cosmic setting. In writing for the Liturgy, he provides these pictorial settings of an event in time, but also within the eternal and cosmic realm. It is at this point that we see the twofold theme of the Samaritan exegesis of the Scriptures. There are two worlds, the world of space and time and event, and the world (the 'real' world) that is eternal. So there are two levels of experience in the human mind, the level of the intelligence by which a man may obey the laws revealed through Moses, and a level at which in wisdom a man comprehends through the higher light radiating from the universal Word of God in Moses.

Exalted is the mighty prophet Moses, whose every word is life and blessing (Memar Markah IV.1).

4 · THE PROPHET

From the light created on the first day came the holy spirit, which God made to rest in the loins of the prophets and which he manifested in the image of our lord Moses in the two worlds.¹

If we were to write a history of the Samaritans' understanding of prophecy, we would be writing entirely about Moses' prophethood. True enough, there is a sense in which anyone who acts as a spokes-

¹ Malef 5.

man for God could, in the Samaritan view, be called a prophet.¹ Thus Aaron is called the 'prophet' of Moses, i.e. he acts as spokesman for the prophet of God in certain circumstances. Since this claim for Aaron occurs in the Law (Ex. 4.16), we may account for the Samaritan readiness to regard Aaron as a prophet. If it had not been for the biblical occurrence of the usage, would the Samaritans have attributed prophethood to anyone but Moses, especially in view of Deut. 34.10? Possibly not, although we cannot be certain. In Samaritan tradition Aaron and Moses are specially bound up together, not only because of their physical relationship, but because they acted in concert within the human arena in the execution of a great plan. This plan was the rescue of the elect from the pit of bondage. Aaron's part in the bringing about of that rescue could not be overlooked. He was closely associated with Moses throughout and he did declare the will of God, though that will was in fact revealed through Moses and not through him.

The examination of what the Samaritans meant by prophecy and by the prophetic status and role of Moses in particular does not include much of what would have to be included in a study of the same subject from Judaist or Islamic or Christian literature. The Samaritan position is unique in this respect, for unlike the other three religions from the same Near Eastern origin, Samaritanism recognizes no prophets other than Moses and, in a secondary way *through Moses*, Aaron and Miriam. Islam admitted the past mission of prophets sent by God; Judaism and Christianity have the whole Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) with its large section on the teaching of the prophets. Only the Samaritans restrict this aspect of divine revelation to one person.

This religious phenomenon is explained by what the Samaritans understood prophecy to be. We have to cast out of our minds all modern notions of prophecy, i.e. foretelling the future, foreknowledge and presentience. Prophecy certainly includes foreknowledge (and the declaration of that knowledge before the event), but the Samaritans emphasize an aspect of the *nabi'* (prophet) which receives less emphasis in the other religions. The prophet is the *spokesman* of God, who knows at first hand the divine will. It is obvious

¹ The plural 'prophets' in the last quotation refers to the belief of some late writers that anyone in whom was the holy spirit (the light in the earlier writings) was a prophet. Hence Adam possessed the prophetic insight (Hillukh, Gaster, *Oral Law*, p. 139).

that this definition of prophecy is based on the nature of Moses, and therefore it could not be applied to persons like Zephaniah, Isaiah, etc. It is Moses' Logos role *in the world* that makes him prophet of the world.

That is what the Samaritans everywhere understand the prophetic mission of Moses to be. He did of course possess the unique faculty of knowing the will of God because (a) he was the Word, and (b) in the historical context he was possessed of the light to a degree of manifestation nearer to that of God than that of man, and (c) he was almost always in communion with God in mind (his only errors or deviations took place when he allowed himself to be subject to the weaknesses brought about by human limitations), and (d) as far as later writers are concerned Moses possessed 'holy spirit', and thus, in the Judaist and Christian manner, he was possessed of prophetic insight.

In order to grasp the full scheme presented in the literature, let us observe point by point the essential elements in its teaching on this subject.

As a man living in the created world, Moses the prophet was on a mission for God, who had sent him to the world. He was gifted with prophethood because that was the sole means of revelation in any direct way between God and his Man. To lesser mortals, even the Patriarchs, angelic visitations and visions were used, and dreams had a place too in the revelatory scheme. But for Moses the son of God's House, entrusted with the salvation of his people, nothing less than prophetic status was possible, for such status meant the possession of the divine will; it connoted also the expounding of it. Receiver and transmitter, the prophet of God was the only means of direct revelation. Similarly the most direct means of inspiration, aside from the Law revealed through Moses, was through the communion with the greater mind, the cosmic source of all knowledge, which was the mind of Moses.

Here is a quotation from Markah's Memar that explicitly declares sole revelation to be through prophecy:

From your mouth they shall hear, and through you (Moses) they shall believe. Were it not for your prophethood, I would not have revealed myself, and my voice would not have been heard, not as long as the world should last!

I revealed myself to former good men through an angel, not by revelation of my own mighty self. Behold, I reveal myself to you and make my voice to be heard by you (I.9).

The prophetic power, as it is sometimes called, receives its warrant and seal by the fact that, to describe it in religious terms, the owner has been made the recipient of the divine name. If by this is meant the same thing as the creative Word (YEHI), then the possession of the divine Word gave to Moses absolute knowledge of the will of God.

That such supernormal knowledge was of necessity implied in the fact of prophethood is indicated by Markah's description of Moses' knowledge of what had taken place in the past and what was still to come. The Edomites, who had their chronicles of the past, were amazed when Moses declared to them the facts contained in those chronicles. How could he have known? He must surely have supernormal power. Power and prophecy cannot be separated. As Markah expresses it later in the same section:

It behoves us ever to bow down before him to the ground, with heart full of faith, and honour the memory of a faithful prophet who has power over all creatures (II.9).

How could he have known? He must be a prophet. That was also the reaction of the Samaritan woman on hearing the Galilean traveller state the facts of her past life. 'Sir, I can see that you are a prophet.'

Another demonstration of his prophetic power, as seen through Samaritan eyes, lay in his foreknowledge and wisdom in the way he allotted territory to the tribes. Markah describes the matter, stating that Moses expounded what God had commanded him and revealed to them what would bring them greatness in future days—all this in interpretation of Deut. 27.11:

When he began, he divided the tribes with the great prophetic insight of one for whom it was right to reprove, but not himself to be reproved. Moses announced the crossing of the Jordan and named those who would receive the blessing and those who would receive the curse (Memar III.3).

Moses, who had the right to reprove, but not to be reproved, clearly must have been possessed of supreme authority; it was his prophethood that demonstrated that authority.

We have already stated that the chief aim of the mission of Moses was the salvation of God's elect. Another aim, representing an idea developed along different lines, is found in connection with his prophetic role. His commission to speak for God, not unlike that

received by Jeremiah, came to be expounded in Christian terms. So we read in the Defter that Moses was sent, according to Markah,

That all generations might believe in God and in Moses (C. p. 50.19). The full range of tasks involved in his prophetic mission is set out by the same writer in the Memar:

He said, 'Moses, Moses', telling him that he would bring about his will and his recompense (I.1).

Markah further expands (*ibid.*):

He said, 'Moses, Moses', revealing to him that he would be vested with prophethood and the divine name.

He said, 'Moses, Moses', revealing to him that he would be the deliverer of the Hebrew and the slayer of the Egyptians.

Yet the prophetic role involves much more than the immediate situation, and Markah elsewhere shows his readers just how wide-reaching the prophetic role really was. The attribute 'son of his House' is closely associated with another title, 'prophet of the world'. This last is not infrequent, as if to say that the Samaritans conceived of Moses' prophetic role as being applicable to the whole world and not to Central Palestine's inhabitants alone. The Samaritans conceived of the prophethood of Moses as inherently relating to the whole of God's 'House' and not to the 'house of Israel' alone. That the prophetic status and role of Moses was not confined to the three-dimensional world, but was indeed of cosmic and eternal significance, is indicated by the frequently occurring phrase in the Liturgy 'prophet of the two worlds'.

The notion of prophethood being a function of the cosmic person of Moses was well authenticated by Markah and Amram Darah centuries before Islam. For in the Defter (see also C. p. 288) Moses is called 'the prophet of all generations' in the sense of 'world prophet', i.e. cosmic prophet manifest in the world. The final extension in the religious literature seems to have been reached when Moses received the title 'prophet of *all* the worlds'. This fuller notion, implicit in the early period, may have been brought into being to counter the claims of Islam for its prophet, but the notion merely expresses what is really the extent of the Samaritan Israelite's view of the prophet's mission and commission.

In a long discussion of the wonderful deliverance of Israel wrought through Moses, Markah states:

There are three ultimates in his prophethood which were revealed: the glorious name of the Lord; miracle; the role of priest (Memar II.2).

We have noted that Moses was held to be uniquely vested with the name of God and that he was possessed of power from God, so that he was able to bring about the deliverance of Israel in a miraculous way. Notice has been taken of the fact that Moses was also a priest. In the passage just quoted Markah observes all three features of the prophethood of Moses, including the priestly role. Of course there is nothing new in regarding prophet and priest as one, for from the time of the Hebrew prophet Malachi on, if not much earlier, there existed the idea that the true priesthood in its authority included also the function of prophethood as witness to the revelation of God in the world. The Samaritans saw in Moses the Spokesman (Word) of God, not only in his pre-existent state as the Logos, but also in the mundane sphere as God's Spokesman to the elect. We shall see in the next section that he was regarded as also the Spokesman *for* the elect—because of his inherent authority. Now the priesthood obviously must mean more than the possession of authority in spiritual matters; there is a more specific and practical aspect. This is the aspect of carrying out religious ceremonial and law and of exercising legal decision (*torah*). Moses undoubtedly acted as legal adviser (e.g. Ex. 18.13), but the role of priest in the limited, purely practical sense was not specifically his. Aaron his brother was the one chiefly concerned in and commissioned for priestly duty, but Moses was of the house of Levi and therefore a priest. It is in the realm of authority that Markah and his successors saw the true nature of the prophethood of Moses. He spoke the message of God, just as he expanded, expounded and taught the Law which he had copied from the 'autograph' of God.

Prophet and priest, then, can be one thing; one man could be both, but only if the divine authority was within him. Prophethood was not something that could be acquired by learning or practice; it was received by divine commission. As such it was held to be beyond quantitative assessment. It was, like the divine light, a qualitative thing. At its highest level Moses exercised it; at a lower level others could practise it once they were commissioned. Markah puts this point plainly when he says:

His prophethood was like the surrounding sea, for from it seventy prophets prophesied without any diminishing of it (Memar II.12).

This quotation brings us to the last element in the Samaritan teaching about prophethood. An essential and integral part of the prophetic role was the possession of wisdom. Wisdom, as distinct from knowledge, could only be acquired through a process of gradual development or evolution—and then only where the ‘man of wisdom’ manifested the light at a high enough degree. That wisdom was involved in prophethood is made clear in many passages from the liturgical mystical literature and both are directly associated with the manifestation of the divine light.

Praise be to the Illuminator who fills the wise with the spirit of wisdom, so that they become like lamps shining in the world and dispelling the dark (Memar VI.7).¹

Happy the mind that radiates wisdom, whose owner dwells in the Garden under fine trees (*ibid.*).

Like wisdom, prophethood can be regarded as the status of one who holds a treasure within his mind. Markah describes Moses in the following manner:

This is the prophet whose prophethood is a treasure that will not be removed from him as long as the world lasts—the father of wonders, the store of miracles, the companion of the covenants, the light of the two worlds, the sun of prophethood, like whom there is no prophet from the whole human race (Memar VI.9).

Thus we may see several functions within the prophetic role as it is observed at its highest level of manifestation in the life of Moses. Being what he was, his prophetic status involved the radiating of the pure light of God, the declaration of the divine will, the executorship of that will, the holy priesthood whereby the elect of God are preserved pure and holy. It is no wonder that such a being should himself become more than mere *agens* for God, more than just a messenger or apostle. He became the one to be followed that God may be reached. In the high noon of Samaritanism this meant the mystical contemplation of the Word and the Law, and the communion through the chain of purity² with the light of Moses’ spirit. In the centuries of decline, the Silver Age of the religion, following Moses became the following by adherence to a man endowed with divine functions. The same sort of attitude may be discerned among Christians. There are those whose thinking and belief are theocentric, and there are those whose thinking and belief are christocentric. We can see that the theocentric element in Samaritanism is the aspect of

¹ Cf. the thought of Matt. 5.16.

² See Chapter XIV, Section 1.

that faith that has lasted till the present day, while the christo-centric expression of it seems to have declined the longer the Samaritans lived under the aegis and patronage of Islam, a religious system that is entirely theocentric in outlook.

One final aspect of the priestly role within his prophethood that will also introduce us to the next section of this chapter is Moses' historical act of atonement for Israel. The Samaritans, like the Judaists, place a considerable amount of emphasis on the great prayer of Moses whereby Israel were saved from the dire wrath of their Lord. This is the prayer of Ex. 32. The Samaritan emphasis starts on v. 30:

On the morrow Moses said to the people, 'You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.'

Moses' offer of his own life in place of the people's (v. 32) constituted the supreme act of atonement. His fervent prayer in an earlier part of the chapter finds its greatest emphasis in the oft repeated words:

Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people (v. 12).

Some of the later, mediaeval writers, build their whole philosophy about the role of the historical person of Moses on these verses, but fundamentally we must turn to the earliest stratum in the extant literature in order to see that the true prophetic (and priestly) role of Moses derived from his celestial, not his terrestrial, state and status. As a priest he could offer atonement, but not the atonement as normally offered by the priests. He offered and would undoubtedly have given his life for his people. In this he was priest supreme, but the real *motif* is that of prophet supreme, Spokesman of God, Spokesman for man. This intercessory aspect of his mission we shall now examine.

5 · THE INTERCESSOR

*Let us follow after the great prophet Moses, who leads us well, for our Lord sent him to us! Where is there a prophet like Moses, who was a good father to all Israel, bringing them up and caring for, atoning for them . . . and also giving them life through his prayer?*¹

The introductory remarks already made about the intercessory role of Moses the priest-prophet had reference to the temporal order, for

¹ Memar Markah IV.7.

it was in history that Moses offered up his prayer and presented himself on behalf of the people to whom he was sent as saviour. It is necessary now, in order to have a comprehensive view, to expand this concept somewhat, although it will be in speaking of the great Day of Judgement that we shall see the final outreach of the doctrine.

Moses is the one who makes intercession on our behalf, to bring life to souls. Through his prayer we have life and do not die (C. p. 323.2-3).

Remarks like this are typical of mediaeval thought. It is clear that there was continuing belief in the mediating role of Moses—even three thousand years after his earthly life was over. Why should the Samaritans maintain such a belief, such a considerable extension of the biblical statement about Moses the intercessor, such a transmigration from the world of three dimensions to the world of infinity? As we have had occasion to observe so often, it is to the influence of Christian thinking that we must turn. In that thinking and belief Jesus Christ became the great High Priest and Intercessor at the right hand of God. The Epistle to the Hebrews may well have been more influential as far as the Samaritans (=Hebrews!) were concerned than has hitherto been realized.

It is always Moses, never angels, who intercedes before God for men and acts as mediator between the two worlds. As prophet of the two worlds, as one who belonged *sui generis* to both worlds, it was natural that Moses should readily be considered mediator between the two. Perhaps it was this line of thinking that led to the identification of Moses with the Taheb. In any case, there are many hundreds of statements made in the literature about the intercessory and the intermediary role of Moses on earth and beyond.¹

The prayer of Abraham on behalf of the people of Sodom is mentioned fairly often in the literature, but the element of intercession in that prayer did not give it the status accorded to Moses' prayer for Israel. Indeed only one person possessed special endowment in prayer:

Came (Moses) the master of prayer, before whom and after whom there is no other (comparable) (C. p. 749.2).

From the fourteenth century on we find that the Samaritans took the view that the intercessory powers of Moses worked backwards in time as well as forwards. In his celestial role he could pray on behalf

¹ Only in the mediaeval literature, however.

of the generations past as well as on behalf of the generations present and to come.

Moses speaks to the world's Creator of your need and that (as well) of the generations which have been before you (C. p. 749.10).

Abdallah's statement here, like that of so many others of his period, could refer simply to the biblical situation and not to all men of the past, but within the context of the Samaritan thinking about Moses the intercessor we are entitled to regard it as having an everlasting connotation, i.e. having reference to men from the beginning to the end of time—and, as we shall see, beyond time too.

The Samaritans did not develop a doctrine of reconciliation in any formalized way. Such a doctrine, however, is implicit on every hand. If Moses was the intercessor for men, as he was the spokesman for God, then, as we have noted, communion between man and God could take place only through the person and work of Moses, and men could become reconciled to God only through Moses. This is to overlook the essential part played by the priesthood in ensuring a man's right approach to God. Yet this is only the biblical position. The Samaritans did go beyond that, we have shown. We have reached in effect the doctrinal position achieved by Christianity.

Let God be reconciled to us through him whose light shone, Moses our prophet (C. p. 489.13-14).

We would expect, in view of such belief, that the Samaritans would in time come to the view of the Christians that the Man of God himself should become the object of petition. There are many passages in the mediaeval liturgical writings that demonstrate beyond all doubt that at least some Samaritan thinkers came to just that view and developed it in their own way. In many cases where the petition is based on the fourth-century ideology we read of prayers addressed to God *by the merit of Moses*. E.g.

We petition thee by the merit of thy prophet to deliver . . . (Liturgy, *passim*).

We must observe here the central and vital point about the meaning of *merit*. Often translated 'for the sake of' after the Christian liturgical fashion, the Hebrew expression *be'amal* really means (literally) 'by the work of'. Thus the doctrine of merit, which will be the subject of special study later, is formulated in terms of what had been accomplished *in deed* in the lifetime of the person involved.

On the other hand, one aspect of Samaritan thought in the

mediaeval period unconsciously suppressed the elevation of Moses in this regard, when it included Moses with the Patriarchs as sources of merit through which appeal could be made to God. In other words, once a doctrine of merit, no matter how inchoate or lacking in formulation, had been accepted, a traditional list of persons of merit was bound to come into being. So we read such a typical expression as Sa'dallah's:

By the merit of the three ancestors (Patriarchs) and Joseph your father, and by the merit of the best of the faithful, Moses your prophet, by the merit of Aaron and his sons the priests, who performed priestly duties in your holy tabernacles (C. p. 731.23-25).

We shall examine the evolution of this quasi-doctrine in another section, but here we recognize the partial downfall of Moses, in that to some extent he has been relegated to a place within the chain of purity. He does not have the pedestal of devotion to himself here. However, we cannot claim that all Samaritan teachers of the mediaeval world were content with this state of affairs. We may well put the blame for the decline of Moses' star on the Muslims, whose ideas about others' merit as efficacious in petitions were quite definitely not those of Sa'dallah and his co-religionists. Again, we have the problem of not knowing whether it was eastern or western Samaritanism that developed the concept. Probably it was the eastern, for it is this branch of Samaritanism that normally (re-) produces Christian ideas. In mediaeval Syria we find many lists of men and women through whom, to whom and by whose merit petitions were offered. This decline in Christian belief was ended largely by the Reformation for a large part of the Christian Church, but the Samaritans had no great reformation after the fourteenth century and there is no doubt that their religion has declined slowly but steadily from then on up to the present day.

IX

MOSES' DEATH, ASCENSION AND ASSUMPTION

*The cloud came down and lifted him up from the sight of all the congregation of Israel.*¹

THE BIRTH OF Moses has its setting in the cosmos and not just in the lower world; since his life and mission derived from the cosmic plan of the eternal God, it will not surprise us to read of his death as something to be regarded within the same cosmic context.² Nor need we be surprised that a religious community ascribing so much to their prophet should be influenced by prevailing current notions about the ascension and assumption of the Man of God. Apocryphal writings and New Testament alike presented a unique picture of the final moment of the departing saviour or prophet. Certainly the Samaritan presentation of the departure of Moses represents an integral part of the concept of the Man of God in the world of men. It may be that this was a natural development out of the words of Deut. 34.5f. and that the Samaritans, like other religious communities, were well aware of early current ideologies in this regard. Thus they could adopt (and adapt) such a belief about the death and ascension of Moses, finding a warrant for it in Deut. 34. There is no direct biblical warrant for the description of Moses' ascension, as Markah portrays it, but it is possible that the words of Deut. 34.6 offered just enough of mystery to allow of some development of the supernatural element in the story of his death.

In any case, Markah devotes most of one book of his Memar, Book V, to the subject of the death, ascension, glorification and assumption of the prophet Moses. We could do no better than set out some of the leading ideas and imagery from his description,

¹ Memar Markah V.4.

² Judaism, having a less than cosmic setting for its teaching, has limited traditions about the death of Moses.

pointing out where appropriate the distinctive features that apply peculiarly to Samaritan belief about Moses in the widest sense.

Right from the start of his story Markah places the setting within the cosmic context, by asserting:

His span includes knowledge of the Beginning and it goes on to the Day of Vengeance (V.1).

As the pre-existent Word of God, Moses of course knew the Beginning, indeed he spoke the creative words himself. We have noted in connection with his mission that he was possessed of secret knowledge while he was on earth, such knowledge including the secrets of the Day of Vengeance—the pattern of things to come (after Ex. 25.40). Thus our story is not just the story of a dying prophet, but of the assumption of the cosmic figure of a saviour and intercessor. It will be noted that there is a flavour of the former, the dying of a prophet, in the story too, where we read of the national sorrow and anguish at his parting, and of Moses' own reactions to the news of his approaching passing from the earthly scene, but such descriptions are rightly no more than a flavour in the whole, which reminds the reader constantly of the historical life of the cosmic figure. Perhaps this is the greatest achievement of Markah in Book V of his Memar, for his description and teaching in this regard compare most favourably with the associated descriptions in Judaism and Christianity, where the historical significance is often lost in the stress on the mystical entry into the celestial realm (the state of glory). Markah succeeds in maintaining the firm bond between Moses and Israel right to the end, when Moses is actually moving out of sight, with the result that the reader feels the pathos all the more. There is genuine sorrow in Markah's account, but that sorrow is confined within an opposite emotion at the glorification of him who is returning to his Lord. It is to be observed also that Markah regards his story as pertaining to the historical life of the prophet and he leaves him in the tomb. We know from later sources that the Taheb was to be *Moses redivivus*, i.e. the historical manifestation of the person of Moses in a new situation, but all the time we are aware as we read the account that the real Moses, the eternal Man of God, is not really left in the tomb, though no Samaritan ever went as far as to assert this. Almost every later writer who wrote about this seems to have taken the view that Moses would not regain his full celestial and eternal status until his work as Taheb was done and when he the

Man of God, Spokesman of God and for Israel, would function eternally at the head of a pure and delivered people.

In view of the actual evidence available to us, we must confine ourselves to the view that the historical life of Moses ended in the tomb. There was no special resurrection as in the Christian belief about Jesus. Moses ascends, and dies. Perhaps one aspect of Christian belief that has been influential in the development of the Samaritan belief is the belief in the return of Jesus in cosmic circumstances. Moses the historical person actually died, but he as Taheb according to the later tradition did not rise from Moses' tomb; we have no evidence for such a notion. The Taheb was born into the world in the normal way, and we are left to guess at what happened to the entombed Moses in the meantime. The belief in a resurrected Moses is implicit, but not expressed explicitly.

We begin the story of the death and ascension of Moses with the announcement by God of Moses' impending departure. This is based on Deut. 32.49f., where Moses is instructed to 'ascend this mountain of the Abarim¹ and die there'. The reaction of Moses to this declaration and command is one of praise and worship. He says,

Thou dost not show partiality, not to prophet nor to righteous man. Thus all men must die, even Moses. We next read on the cosmic side how the powers and mysteries petitioned God not to let him die. The idea of an immortal Moses may have been mooted in Markah's day. So the sea said:

He who divided me and dried me up with his rod and revealed in me forty wonders does not merit death.

Moses stands before his Lord as these petitions are being made, but the Lord states that the day of his passing approaches and no petition is acceptable at this time, and states that

This day is the end, the final moment of my prophet Moses (V.2).

Thus the prophetic mission is completed and the end is near. Moses is stricken with grief, not because of his own approaching end, but because he is fearful for the people being left without his guidance. He fears they will go astray as they did before (cf. Deut. 31.29). He is regretful that he will not live to see the entry into the promised land, and, in a curious passage, he ascribes his death to original sin. This is one of the clearest expressions in all Samaritan literature of the

¹ The Samaritans understand this to mean the mountain of the Hebrews.

belief in original sin. Moses is almost certainly attributing the necessity for death to the fall of man through sin.

The end of my journeying has come and today I depart from the world to die. There is no prolongation of life for me. I am purchased by the word of the serpent, taken up through the eating by Eve, pledged through the action of Adam.

As mortal man at the end of his earthly days he confesses that no hope is left in him. This is Moses the man speaking, but man at the highest level, for he at once ascribes praise to God and declares his abundant truth and faithfulness.

Moses then begins to make preparations for the period after his death, so that the people of Israel will be faithfully led on the way he had started. He gives instructions to Joshua to bring the chief priests to him, and there is an excellent description of the sorrow felt by these religious leaders at the news of the calamity that was about to befall them and their people. The trumpet is blown as on all solemn occasions and the people assemble. Moses instructs them in the Law and in the faith. Joshua receives instructions in wisdom (Deut. 34.9) and is spiritually fortified to be the national leader in place of Moses.

Moses warns that the divine favour will be hidden away again and evils will be multiplied the more; apostasy will be found everywhere and there will be none zealous for God. With this warning to the people he exhorts them to remember their elect status as an 'holy people'. Joshua, Eleazar, Ithamar and Phinehas are each given instructions about their future role. The Levite priests, the princes, judges, teachers and all the congregation are exhorted to play their rightful and dutiful part.

At the completion of these instructions and exhortations Moses prepares to depart this life. The cosmic setting is resumed when Markah writes:

The world shook at the moment when he rose to his feet.¹

After a pathetic and tearful farewell to all the tribes and to his successor in the task of leading them, Moses gives a blessing. The people appeal to him not to ascend the mountain, but when they realize the inevitability of his departure, they bless him. They commend him as their saviour, priest and prophet, but in great anxiety

¹ Cf. the earthquake at the time of Christ's crucifixion (Matt. 27.51f.; Mark 15.38; Luke 23.45).

ask who will there be to pray on their behalf when he is gone. The role of intercessor cannot be filled.

The great prophet Moses ascended Mount Nebo with great majesty, crowned with light, all the hosts of the heavenly angels gathered to meet him (V.3).

The human Moses and the cosmic person merge for a moment, as they had done on Mount Sinai at the great theophany, and we read how Moses slowly ascended the mountain and every few steps would turn round and look upon the people in great sorrow, like a mother leaving her children; yet as he ascended, the nearer he drew to the top of the mountain and the assembled angels who were waiting to greet him, the more his soul rejoiced to be meeting his Lord. Having reached the top, he could see the Israelites far below and he could see the arrayed angels into whose company he was about to enter. As in the not dissimilar picture of the ascension of Christ in Acts 1.9, he entered into the cloud and was enveloped 'like light that is extinguished'. As he disappeared from mortal sight, the people gave forth a cry of anguish, the chief element of which was the feeling of dread that there was none now to take his place as intercessor.

Who will have compassion for us after you? Who will make atonement for our sins after you?

Who will extinguish the fire of wrath from us after you?

Thus Israel bemoaned their loss, while the heavenly angels were in a state of joy at Moses' entry into their midst. They had come down to meet him; indeed all the powers¹ descended on to Mount Nebo and the glory approached and embraced him,

While all the host of the hidden regions and of the revealed ones came to do honour to Moses the Man.

At this stage of his reception, Markah's poem turns to the glorification of the prophet. This glorification came from the elements that had supported him in his earthly mission, the water, heaven itself, the earth, fire and the cloud. Markah compares the action of the cloud on Mount Sinai with its action on Mount Nebo, again drawing the historical figure and the cosmic manifestation together. It appears that Markah took his warrant for his picture of Moses being received into the cloud from the statement of Ex. 19.9:

Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe you for ever.

¹ Cf. Eph. 3.10.

The part played by the cloud of God's entry in the story of the Sinai theophany is repeated in connection with Moses' entry into the upper world from which God had manifested himself on Sinai. On both mountains Moses entered into the mystical state; on both, according to the Samaritan tradition, 'hosts, foundations, powers and angels' appeared *by reason of* Moses the Man of God. The emphasis by Markah on 'by reason of' seems to suggest that such a supernormal manifestation could only take place because of who Moses was. He was of two worlds, son of God's House—which embraced all the universe—Spokesman for God and man. On both occasions Moses was before God. In connection with the first, Markah tells us that

He ascended from human status to that of the angels,
as if he 'returned' to his true state during the experience of the theophany.¹

How could such a one die like ordinary men? The question is answered:

The judgement of death is the judgement of the True One. God thereby judges the whole human race. No one in the world escapes it, neither prophet nor priest, king nor judge, not any of the creatures, for they all go in this path.

The scene is now set for the final demise of Moses the saviour of Israel. As he stood on the top of the mountain, with all the angels round about him paying him tribute, God then 'unveiled the light of his eyes' and showed him the far reaches of the world.² At this point in the cosmic setting, Moses received a vision of what was to take place after the Day of Vengeance, with the result that his fear of human death departed from him. While this was happening, from the human view 'the cloud came down and lifted him up from the sight of all the congregation of Israel'—the imagery being remarkably close to that of Acts 1.9.

With regard to 'what was to happen after the Day of Vengeance' we are not informed by Markah. Why we do not know. We have plenty of information from other sources about the part to be played by Moses in the ideal world or state consequent on the removal of the wicked from the ranks of Israel. His intercessory role on the Day of Judgement is followed by his leadership, as prophet and priest, in

¹ Cf. the description of Jesus in the Transfiguration Story (Mark 9.3) and note the prominence of the cloud in the Sinai theophany and in the Transfiguration story. So also the cloud appears in the ascension of Moses and that of Jesus.

² Cf. the same *motif* in the narrative of the Temptation of Christ.

the new theocratic world, a subject which will occupy our attention in Part V.

God's concern for the dying prophet is such that

The great glory took him by the hand, embracing him and walking before him.

The scene seems to become suddenly switched by a clever literary artifice to Mount Gerizim. While being led by the glory to his resting place, Moses lifts up his eyes and beholds Mount Gerizim, at which sight he prostrates himself. On rising from his prostration he sees the entrance to the cave of burial. We must assume that Markah means Mount Nebo despite the switch of the reader's attention to the sacred mountain of the Samaritans, for that is undoubtedly implied by the words of Deut. 34.5f.

As he approached the open mouth of the cave, Moses wept for mankind,¹ and at the same time gave praise to 'him to whom belonged everlasting life'.

The end of a life! Markah, without waste of words, ends his epic description in the simplest terms.

Great was that moment when the mighty prophet Moses lowered his head and entered the cave.

He turned his face toward Mount Gerizim and lay down on the ground, looking straight in front of him.

God made sleep to fall upon him² and his soul departed without difficulty, without him being aware of it.

So Moses the servant of the Lord died there (Deut. 34.5).

There are three significant points in this last description:

(1) Mount Gerizim is made the last place of Moses' interest. Since the next appearance of Moses as the Taheb was to involve Mount Gerizim in particular, one perhaps sees in Markah's statement a pointer towards the next appearance of the eternal person of Moses in the physical world.

(2) We are told that 'God made sleep to fall upon him', just as he did to Adam prior to the creation of Eve. There are many passages in the literature where Moses, like Jesus in the New Testament,³ is described as the Second Adam. In other passages he is called the Third Adam, Noah counting as the Second. Moses represented the

¹ A detail supplied from the New Testament teaching about Jesus weeping at the entrance to a tomb (John 11.35)?

² Gen. 2.21.

³ I Cor. 15.45.

new era of divine favour in the second (Noah) dispensation, just as he would as Taheb initiate the final era of divine favour after the purification of the world and the victory of God over evil.

(3) 'His soul departed' is quite the traditional way to say that a man's spirit left his body and would not return to it until the general resurrection. Markah's attribution of this human phenomenon to Moses seems to imply that the *physical* Moses was really dead (so Jesus 'gave up his spirit'—John 19.30). If so, then the Taheb could not come from the tomb of Moses. The Taheb is a new creation in the physical world, but the same spirit will be in him that was in Moses.

The last remark of Markah takes us to the end of the human Moses:

So Moses the servant of the Lord died there. He submitted himself to his Lord, as a servant to his master.

So Moses the servant of the Lord died there, according to the command of the Lord.

Thus ends the life of the historic Moses. After we have completed examining the remainder of the Samaritan doctrines, we shall devote a special chapter to a comparison between Moses and Jesus, which will serve as an appendix and as a conclusion which will throw additional light on the rather remarkable Moses of Samaritan belief.¹

¹ A closely similar account of the death of Moses, from a much later period, is to be found in translation in M. Gaster's *The Asatir*, pp. 303f.

PART THREE

THE LIFE OF MAN IN THE WORLD

X

MAN

I · PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ATTRIBUTES

THE SAMARITANS WERE far from oblivious of the biblical view of man as expressed in particular in the Priestly stratum of the Law, but they were able over a long period of time to develop their concepts about where man came from, why he is here, and where he is going, far beyond the limits achieved in biblical times. Like other religions and philosophies in neighbouring regions, and indeed in their own, they succeeded in facing up to many such questions and finding answers that seemed satisfactory.

To many readers the Samaritan view of man as part of a cosmic scheme will come as an agreeable surprise, in that it is not limited to a concern for the Samaritan people to the exclusion of the wider horizons of humanity and its purpose in the universe. We begin the study of man with the observation that man is part and parcel of the cosmic creation. He is no afterthought, nor can he be isolated from the world or even the heavens. The natural phenomena are there that they may reveal God to man and evoke men's praise of him. We obtain some insight into Samaritan thinking in this direction when we consider the cosmic arrangement of man's mental structure. After having spoken of the four elements, Markah writes in his *Memar*:

God has created four divisions in you, too, so that you may exist and be developed with power. These four are desire, idea, conscience and reason—hidden deep within you. They all have a powerful controlling force within your body and bring about your intellect (VI.1).

He continues:

What is in the heavens is in the heart, just as what is in the earth is in the imagination. What is in the four quarters is in the reason, just as what is in any place is in every inner thought.

T.S.—H

It is impossible to say whether Markah is presenting an inchoate philosophy of mentalism, but it is clear from this and from the general tenor of his teaching about man that he held to the cosmic view of man. Man is no animal that he lives in isolation. Without him there would be no creation, for he is involved in it and it in him. We have noted that man is possessed of light from the pure light of God, that Markah's fourth category of light has reference to the human realm within the wider creation—that inner light that exists in the human image and brings about the glorious state of pure humanity, the state of the pristine Adam before his fall from divine favour. We have observed, too, that man is influenced on earth by the sun. The material available for study does not happen to refer to the celestial realm at large, but it is very likely that the Samaritan would assert that man is influenced not only by the energy from the sun's light, but also by the radiating energy of the whole universe, and not only the visible universe, but also the invisible world which is perceived only within one's own mind. The nature of the influence upon man from the sun is expressed by Abisha, when he wrote:

Your whole life is governed by the movement of the sun in its orbit, both outwardly and inwardly.¹

There is no evidence that such statements have an astrological background. The Samaritans like almost every Semitic people had their Zodiac tables and calculations, but these never came to possess the significant place that they have in some other religions. The Samaritan view of the cosmos is complete and matured without astrological beliefs (although they did hold these). What Abisha is saying here and elsewhere is that man is not only influenced by the energy of the sun in a physical way; he is influenced in another way as well. His soul is sustained by its light, for it would have to be the light itself that could influence the soul, while the energy from the light would influence the body and brain. This is not to propose some simple dichotomy of man. The Samaritans knew all the aspects of man as understood by the Greeks, by the Judaist philosophers and no doubt by other nations. They faced the questions of man and man, man and God, man and the world, man and his origin, man and his purpose, and man and his end. From these vital questions the Samaritan thinkers worked out a well-integrated philosophy of man's being.

Enough has already been said in connection with creation about

¹ This and similar thoughts in several of his liturgical poems.

the elements and their place in the creation of man's body. Something has been said in an introductory way about the light that he possesses from *the* light. Now we must pay attention to his constitution in terms of body, soul, mind, spirit, and consider the nature of the image and the form with which man is endowed.

In order to gain some insight into the nature of the image and the form, we shall first take note of what Samaritan writers have said about these various categories.

According to Thomson,

The Samaritans regard Man as having a spiritual as well as a material nature, as being composed of Soul and Body.¹

In other words, the Samaritans, he believed, held to a duality of human experience and to a dichotomy of man. This, however, is far from being the truth. A careful study of material from many centuries, from the fourth to the nineteenth, reveals beyond all doubt that the Samaritans not only held to a trichotomy of man, but went even further than that in their assessment of what makes man what he is.

That body and soul are complementary, not in opposition, is revealed in the following quotation from Markah in the Defer:

Happy are our souls in that they can worship thee; happy are our bodies in that they can bear the fear of thee (C. p. 17.8).

Indeed everything that is belongs to God, expresses God and responds to God. It is only when there is a deviation from the basic purpose and pattern of creation that sin and its consequences appear to mar its harmony.

Markah gives us teaching about the state of the soul and how it is affected by the state of the mind. We shall see later how the mental structure of man was viewed. Markah states (Memar II.1) that the form of the mind is not that of the physical body. There is wisdom implanted or innate in the mind and as a result the whole of the body is kept in well-being, or should be. A true attitude of mind involves among other things a true knowledge of the Law and the sensory contemplation of it. As a consequence of this the soul is 'kept in tune', by which he means that the light within man is maintained at its highest possible level of radiance.

By the observing of the Law is the soul disposed, and according to the state of the soul is the body disposed.

¹ *The Samaritans*, p. 186.

As the (true) stature of a man lies with the soul, so the structure of the soul lies with the Law.

He then quotes Deut. 8.3 to show the significance of spiritual things for the life of man. Thus religion and philosophy are harmoniously blended. Or as a Christian would express it, 'Add to your faith knowledge' (cf. II Peter 1.5), which is precisely what the Samaritans have succeeded in doing in their understanding of God's will for man.

The soul, however, is not in itself an imperishable thing in the sense that the spirit is. It must suffer death like the body. Abisha in the fourteenth century expressed this thought in connection with the consequences of evil-doing, without stating that the spirit of man (which seems in philosophical terms to be the image vitalized by God's power) would perish. The Samaritans appear to have held to the view expressed in Eccles. 12.7 that the spirit would return to God who gave it. This is not conceived as a statement of mortality, for the spirit is never thought of, as soul or body, as perishable. Indeed, there is hardly anything specifically stated about the spirit. In this respect the Samaritans differ from Judaists and Christians. The reason for the apparent difficulty in observing what the Samaritans believed about the nature and structure of man in his immortal form is that they did not think only of a trichotomy of man, but rather that the various categories of man are integrated and exist in terms of the eternal light that permeates his being. Markah states that the distinction between the dead and the living, i.e. before the Day of Judgement, is that the living have soul and spirit, while the dead have only soul. This may reflect the older Old Testament view of a vague, formless existence after death, but Markah does not elaborate his point (Memar I.8). Thus soul is common to living and dead, whereas spirit applies only to the living. By 'spirit' he apparently means the 'breath of life' of the Pentateuch (e.g. Gen. 6.17); i.e. the vitalizing force is absent from the dead. We cannot regard the few Samaritan references to spirit too seriously. It would be fairer to take the overall picture as demonstrated throughout the literature. With this caution we discover that 'spirit' is for the Samaritan thinker an old-fashioned term which he uses only now and then through wont and consuetude. The true picture shows that he believed that man was 'living' because he possessed the animated, vitalized image. God in his wisdom had given the image a form; by his power he gave the image life and animation.

Thus the spirit merely means the vitalizing force that distinguishes between dead and living. It has to be borne in mind also that the Samaritans almost certainly avoided the use of the term 'spirit', especially 'holy spirit' (except from the seventeenth century on), because of the Christian position obtaining in their environment and times.

Another line of approach we may take is that in the post-exilic period generally 'spirit' came to be a synonym for 'soul' or 'heart', meaning the seat of human emotion or intelligence. We can compare such biblical references as Isa. 57.15; Job 20.3; 32.18; Dan. 5.20. In many parts of the Old Testament a man is said to be possessed of a 'spirit' of such things as anger, jealousy, humility, and so on. The Samaritans hardly ever use such idioms and prefer to keep the word 'soul' for the general concept of personality and characteristic. In this sense 'soul' is closely linked with 'image', the latter having its specific form distinguishing one human from another. The soul is therefore the personality factor and is the immortal form of the image vitalized by God.

The four Gospels use the word 'spirit' in the sense of 'inner self'.¹ It may be that the Samaritans were influenced by the New Testament terminology, or both were influenced by the same, earlier, current terminology, as we have observed in other connections. But another reason for the Samaritan avoidance of the term may be connected with the fact that they did not accept any belief in spirits other than those of men. They had an evolved doctrine of angels within a purely theocratic context, but these were not spirits; the Samaritans have no real demonology and they were content, unlike their Judaist brethren, to have a very wide term 'Belial' for all evil forces, but not in any personalized sense. Since man is in union with all created beings, both visible and invisible, and all came within the mind and governing of God through a pre-creation plan in accordance with the wisdom which God revealed in his will, the Samaritans found it difficult to accept any notion of spirits, good or bad, which might intervene in the affairs of humanity, individual or corporate.

Despite what has been said, we cannot leave the discussion on 'spirit' without noting two writers who do use the term. In the twelfth century Ab Gelugah wrote about 'my spirit' and 'the spirits of the pure ones of the world', where he seems to mean 'my person' and

¹ For an excellent list of relevant passages, see *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. A. Richardson, 1950, p. 234.

'the persons of the pure ones of the world', i.e. in something like the biblical sense of 'soul' (*nepheš*). Amram the High Priest (1255-69) used both 'souls' and 'spirits' without attempting apparently to differentiate between them. Phinehas, the High Priest (1387-1442), gives God the title 'King of our *spirits*', but again these writers seem to be using archaizing, liturgical language, rather than giving assent to any belief in human spirits as such.

Ab Gelugah gives us some clue to what he means by 'my spirit' when he offers the supplication to God that he will not allow him to experience shame in the face of sinful men. He is thinking of man as a spiritual being and contrasts his spirit with his 'bones' (synonym for 'flesh'), almost in a Pauline contradistinction between 'spiritual' and 'material'. We see, however, that Ab Gelugah and his successors who use the term 'spirit' liturgically are really thinking of the personality or the individuality.

Another feature of liturgical usage is the continuance of the biblical terminology for the mortality of physical man. Even as early as Markah we read:

All tremble before him! Therefore can mere dust rebel against him?
(Defer, C. p. 19.26.)

Physical man, not total man, is transient, and everlasting life lies with God. Man in his earthly existence is no more than the dust and elements from which he was created an animal being, but Markah's statement, confined to the physical situation, is little more than religious poetry. At the level of serious thinking and critical discussion, the Samaritan held to a timeless universe and timeless man.

Abul Hasan made the best attempt to bridge the imaginary gulf between physical man and spiritual man by linking him with both animals and angels. Man's state is between the two.

Like animals he eats and drinks, multiplies and dies.
Like angels he has reason, stands upright and can speak.¹

Like the Judaist Philo, the Samaritan sees man a being created of earthly matter² and divine spirit.

In view of all that has been said up to now about the constituents

¹ For a similar comparison in Judaism see Gen. Rabba 8.11, etc. See Moore's discussion in *Judaism* I, p. 451.

² The finest kind, however, which for the Samaritan meant the dust of Mount Gerizim. For the similar Judaist tradition see Pirke Rabbi Eliezer (ed. Friedländer), pp. 76f. See also in connection with the Judaist claim for Mount Zion's dust *Jubilees* 8.19.

of man in his physical and spiritual manifestation, we can now the better understand the nature of the image of man. Markah illustrates this when he expounds the meaning of Deut. 34.7, referring to 'nor was his natural force abated'. Though this is normally interpreted in physical terms by students of the Old Testament and indeed usually by the Samaritans themselves in other contexts, Markah sees in this a consequence of the fact that Moses 'was vested' with the light-permeated form. The primordial form (really image in our standardized terminology), corrupted and, in a figure, cast off, was not lost for ever by Adam's sin, but 'reserved' within his descendants by God, to manifest itself only in the righteous, i.e. those who reflected or expressed God in themselves by the way they lived. It is the image in man that makes human beings more than animals in intelligence and sensory capacity. It is that image that binds him to his Maker and ensures for him continuing life in the hereafter. Verily man is in the image of God.

We turn now to the one remaining question concerning the constitution of man. Has he a will of his own?

We are transgressors and our *inclination* is toward evil (Defter, C. p. 13.2).

The Samaritan doctrine of freewill is wholly based on the biblical teaching, and particularly Deut. 11.26-28 and 30.15-20. There is little difference in this regard between the beliefs of representative Judaism and Samaritanism.¹ The Samaritan form of the answer is that Adam's fall from his pure and favoured position in the higher world shows that man, right from creation, had a 'mind of his own' and that he could exercise his will to his own good or ill. The use of one's own will for noble purposes is a response, not an automatic reaction; it is a response to the pure light within, and is bound by spiritual law to result in the receipt of an increase of illumination. Good multiplies good. The exercise of one's will for evil purposes is out of accord with the universal plan, created in divine wisdom, and must result in disharmony, which for man means hurt. He alienates himself by such response from him whom his life is meant to express and he finds himself in misery and confusion.

From what has already been said about the constitution of man in terms of mind, it is clear that the will is the key to all decision and action. Conscience, imagination, thought, all aspects of mind he

¹ For a standard example of the pre-Rabbinic attitude see Eccclus. 15.11-17.

may have, but without the empowering factor of will these would have no meaning. If man were a sort of robot-light he could not increase or decrease the light within him. Only by will that motivates conscience or thought or imagination can he improve or diminish his image, or rather the form of that image. Only through the exercise of will does man think, contemplate, give thanks, seek forgiveness, and it is such action, not the digging of the soil, that determines whether a man's light will shine sufficiently brightly on the Day of Judgement.

As man in all his aspects and categories is part of the cosmic scheme and in his ideal state expresses the nature of his Maker, then his will at its ideal must express the will of God. At the mental level, man will therefore be creative; he will possess wisdom *of* God's wisdom, and, being a complete, perfect being, a microcosm of the perfect universe, he will be the possessor of power from God. He will be the Moses-type. The right exercise of will means the acquisition of wisdom and power; such a man is a master. Moses was, to the Samaritan, the supreme example of such a man, because Moses was *the* man; he was God's Man and an example to man of what God is and what man can be.

In the course of noting the constitution of man, we have referred to the nature of his life, his origin, his destination in passing. Let us briefly note particular statements about these points before considering the question of mortality and immortality.

Markah expresses in traditional language where man's life comes from:

Praise be to the King who possesses eternal life, from whom all life is borrowed (Memar VI.6).

The metaphor 'borrowed' is a typical example of the Samaritan's keen sense of humility before God. Thus he can say

Our life comes from thee and in thy hand are our spirits (C. p. 493.33).

Man therefore possesses life because God gave it to him. No more complicated answer is needed; the Samaritan never questioned the ultimate source of life. As we have seen, he had a clear-cut concept about how man should be, and likewise he was sure about the eventual home of man, which in idealistic terms meant the eternal city of God, the Garden of Eden, Paradise.

Several answers have been given to the question: What is man

here for? We have given the basic answer that man *expresses* God when he lives as God teaches him to live. But this is an ideal situation. Many a writer would be content with an answer along traditional religious lines, based on biblical formulae. Such an answer would be that approximating the first answer of the Shorter Catechism. So Amram b. Solomon (nineteenth century):

Thou hast endowed our tongues for the praise of thy oneness (C. p. 212.12).

So all of man is for the praise of God—not, however, in the sense of bowing before his footstool and singing psalms and hymns everlastingly. Even this answer can be interpreted as nothing more than a traditionalist's way of saying, 'Thou hast endowed us to express thee.'

Physical man is an animal with intelligence who has to be disciplined to do what is right. He is rebellious dust and as such must quake in terror of the consequences of his disobedience. We have noted that man as dust is mortal, i.e. his physical body and brain die, but as a being with an image he cannot die. There is a period of stillness for every being during the state called death, which is ended only when the Day of Judgement arrives, preceded by the moment of resurrection.

Spiritual man is immortal. If he has been good, i.e. has expressed God, he lives eternally (or everlastingly, according to some) in a blissful state in an ideal condition; if he has been evil, i.e. has not responded to the light 'that enlightens every man', he lives eternally in a state of punishment and absence from the eternal city of God.

Thus at the physical level

There is an end to the fullness and light of all mortal lamps (C. p. 51.15).

But at the spiritual level the same writer, Markah, can say:

. . . a great salvation, which pardons sinners that they may not perish (C. p. 56.9).

The Samaritans could well be proud of this distinction between man as a creature subject to harsh physical restrictions and man as a being who can react to the light within and express God in his life on earth, so that spiritual man controls and disciplines physical man, a truth that is expressed at the exhortatory level in many religions from a different point of view.

2 · SPIRITUAL LIFE

We have seen how men have the light within, which enlightens them and thus enables them to achieve higher and higher states of being. It is now our purpose to observe man in the moral and spiritual context. Naturally the Samaritan depends almost entirely on the Law for this, and so much that is written in any book on the spiritual teaching of the Old Testament applies in the case of the Samaritan teaching. However, there are some different emphases in the latter case, arising from the cosmic view of creation and of man.

Here we turn from philosophical concepts to simpler religious ones. The Samaritans after all were a distinctively religious community. It was not their philosophy that made them a different people from their neighbours. It was their religion. That religion is an historical one and its teaching comes from God's revelation through historical personages. In addition therefore to the revelation of God through the light as it manifests in men, there is the actual manifestation of God in history. The salvation wrought by him at the Exodus is *par excellence* the act of God that saved men, Israelite men, from the consequence of disobedience to God. The righteous forefathers, especially Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, had demonstrated God in their way of life and in their meritorious acts. How that demonstration was to affect the Samaritan attitude to God from the supplicatory point of view is seen in the chapter on merit. The salvation wrought by the Creator was, in Markah's eyes and in the eyes of all Samaritans thereafter, a cosmic thing. Man's dealings in moral and spiritual things have also a cosmic context, but even within this, perhaps the microcosm within the greater macrocosm, there is a scheme of salvation which applies to the Samaritans in particular. From the teaching of Markah we learn that what he taught applied only to the Samaritans, and in no way reflected his opinion about the status of non-Samaritans. What we have to say in this chapter undoubtedly would reflect the Samaritan position with reference to all mankind, but it is everywhere expressed in terms of the elect nation of God.

The covenants made by God with certain historical individuals were regarded, as by all sects whose teaching is derived from the Old Testament, as having binding force and applying to the descendants of those with whom the covenants were made. Perhaps the chief feature of the Samaritan view here is this very point, that the descen-

dants of those thus covenanted will partake of the covenants and so participate in the maintaining of them. Over and over again the Samaritan writer 'reminds' God in his prayers of the covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. We have to think of Samaritanism in a corporate sense rather than in an individual one as far as spiritual duties in general are concerned.¹ For the Samaritan, man's obligations to God lie in the national response to God's teaching through revelation and in communal performance of the duties that represent the human side of the covenants. The overall term 'the covenant' includes the various historical covenants and becomes an idea in itself, but nowhere does it take the form of the covenant expressed by Jeremiah (31.31f.), although the Samaritans have shown themselves capable of such a thought. They, too, could think of the circumcised heart and relegate the circumcision of the flesh to a lesser status; still necessary as part of the religious rite, physical circumcision became something taken for granted. The circumcision of the heart could never be taken for granted. This was something every Samaritan had to learn. He had many opportunities for learning the importance of this, and the chief of these was the revelation of God in Moses, 'his Man'.

Revelation through Moses and the teaching that came thereby was the primary source of inspiration through exhortation and admonition. It was to the teaching of Moses the lawgiver that the Samaritan teacher always had to turn, because that to him was the highest point of divine revelation. Thus all that man is and does is judged in terms of that teaching. The spiritual community, a national one, was bound together not only by certain religious characteristics like the performance of the Law and the various distinctive features of the biblical injunctions such as circumcision and Sabbath observance, but by the personality of Moses. In this respect the Samaritan community follows the Christian, but with a different historical personality as the source of divine revelation.

One keynote of the Samaritan attitude towards God is man's utter dependence on him. As all men depend on him as the source of their being and the sustainer of their life through the light, so they must depend on him for moral estate and spiritual welfare. The teaching of Abul Hasan in the eleventh century reflects that of Markah when he writes (Jaffa MS, fol. 88):

¹ The individual aspect is considered in the next section.

We rely on thy great might; we are glorified by thy divine being, for we have none to rely upon but thee.

All else is nought beside thee, for thou, O God, dost possess heaven and earth and hast dominion in both realms eternally.

Where is there a god to compare with thee, O Lord, or who can take thy place, for thou art King of all kings, who loosest the loins of the great, who causest to pass away, but art thyself eternally unchanging.

This is the typical expression of utter dependence on God in Old Testament terms. The same writer in the Defter carries the thought further:

Thou hast brought into being for all Israel's assemblies deep faith in thee, that they may carry out thy decrees and commandments as far as they are able (C. p. 72.4).

The emphasis here is one that goes a little way beyond the Old Testament, though derived from it. The stress on God's gift of faith (*'aimenūta*) to men, that they may have the strength to carry out God's requirements as covenanted, is one that many writers render in terms of praise and wonderment.

A further step is taken when Abul Hasan writes in the same composition:

We are obliged to give thanks to thee, for thou dost furnish us with all our needs. Thou thyself art God who requirest nothing, but grantest to us our needs freely (C. p. 72.8-9).

A sense of awe and wonder developed among the Samaritans, as among other religious communities, over the realization of God's free gifts. He demands nothing in return, apart from a way of life that brings reward to him who lives it. God demands what is for man's good—a frequent assertion—but has no *need* of man's good. This thought is to be judged within the religious context. Markah the philosopher could not write like that, at least not in one of his philosophical contexts, for there the thought would be rather that God supplies physical, moral and spiritual needs without any request being required on man's part. God has so constructed men that they respond to his 'gift' of the light; they do not require to ask him for it. It is there, innate, if only they will realize it.

Yet religion and philosophy exist side by side. The older ideologies with their biblical terminology never died, and if one reads a nineteenth-century Samaritan composition, one might at first glance assume that the Samaritans are an Old Testament people who have advanced little beyond biblical concepts.

Let us now take note of man's relationship to God in this context. Markah again provides the best illustrations of the Samaritan position. Writing in connection with Israel's privileged position, he states:

Never was said of a people what has been said of you, O Israel! No people have experienced the like of what you have experienced. If there had been hostility between you and the True One, you would not have had such experience. Whom have you seen in the world who has been an enemy to the True One and prospered in his doings? (Memar III.2.)

There is no apparent distinction in the Samaritan mind between material and spiritual rewards, just as there is no clear differentiation in their teaching about the Garden of Eden between its physical benefits and its spiritual bliss. Perhaps this lack of distinction lies in their cosmic concept of God, man and the world. The covenant between God and Israel is conceived of in eternal rather than everlasting terms. Its benefits accrue and come to full fruition in a world that is not in the time sequence. The harmonious relationship between God and Israel, largely wrought by the meritorious lives of the righteous of the world, is the essential element in the good life, whether material or spiritual. Dependence on God involved the carrying out on Israel's side of the covenantal agreement, which is thought of as an unending, corporate experience throughout the generations, past, present and future. Who could possibly prosper in the world to any extent if he is not a friend of God? This is the Samaritan question that is often asked in this connection. The righteous ones whose lives brought merit to the nation were called by some writers 'the three friends of God'.

Markah continues:

I am certain that you will turn back after erring appears among you. He who loves the True One . . . will be happy through him and prosperity will be brought about (Memar III.2).

It is part of the character of such a covenanted people that they must surely 'turn back' (a Semitic idiom for 'repent') to God after erring, a Markah metaphor for sin, has appeared. This is idealistic language, of course, but it expresses the pure concept which it is ever religion's duty to express in a world of men who make themselves imperfect by turning away to less than the perfection revealed by the love of the all-sustaining God.

In our study of the immanence of God the following remark of Markah finds its place, but we may note the fact that the writers of all periods speak with utter conviction when they say with Markah:

If you come to your Lord with sincerity, you will find him (Memar III.9).

Whatever the Samaritans may have thought about the will of God, which is ever but partly comprehended by men, they have complete confidence in his willingness, nay readiness, to accept the penitent when they turn to him. After all, they are responding to something within them that is *of* God. In philosophical terms acceptance is a reaction in keeping with God's laws; in religious terms, following the Pentateuchal thought, man 'turns to' God in his need and God forgives. It is when we think of our subject from the point of view of corporate responsibility that we are obliged to read in Pentateuchal terms. Thus the priest has to atone for the people and the people have to beseech God in communal worship. In the philosophical context the individual has to understand himself and his relationship to God before he can manifest by reaction the divine light within himself.

The finest expression of the truth of man's spiritual needs and dependence upon God and God's 'automatic' acceptance of man's genuine plea is found in the Memar:

All this I have taught you, that you may be aware and bring your mind to bear on what you require to do, for he who created you brings you close to himself and reveals to you that wherein lies your prosperity. Do not make yourself an enemy of God! You would be accursed and you would have no deliverer. Have consideration for yourself . . . and do not be associated with those who do evil, nor abandon those who do good. But if you come to your Lord with sincerity, you will find him. He will accept you, for he is merciful and pitiful to those who come and go [i.e. ordinary people] (III.9).

There are some idiomatic expressions in the passage that can only be understood after a study of Markah's teaching and style, but it is sufficient for our purpose to observe how he appeals to reason, while asserting the religious point of view. He could have spoken about responding to the inner light, but he is content here to request of his readers that they use their common sense and realize how close to God they can be, thanks to the beneficent nature of God. The appeal to the good life and the assertion about its rewards reflect the merciful nature of God. There is hardly any biblical statement used

by the Samaritans as often as the statement 'God merciful and gracious' (Ex. 34.6). In some passages in later sources based on the Memar the attributes of Creator and Judge are subsidiary to the more potent attribute of Merciful One.

Thus the covenantal relationship between God and Israel is expressed often by the Samaritans in what seem to be one-sided terms. It is as if God is so merciful that man cannot fail to prosper in the end. However, this would be a total misunderstanding of the Samaritan system of belief, for its thinkers knew only too well what the Day of Judgement would mean for those who were 'enemies of God', i.e. non-keepers of the terms of the covenant.

Before turning to the obligations on the human side more pointedly, it is to be stressed that there is no Samaritan 'mystery' of capricious injustice in divine terms. Markah puts it thus:

God only seeks of us what is for our good, not what will be harmful to us (Memar III.5).

Despite the severity of the persecutions that afflicted them for centuries, despite the terrible droughts and the plagues, no Samaritan ever seriously considered that God was responsible. He at once assumed that Israel had somehow failed to execute its part of the covenantal 'bargain', that it had shut out the favour of God. If there was a period of divine disfavour, then men had brought it about and the generations after must suffer until their merit was sufficient to 'open the floodgates of his mercy' once more. God's mercy was no tap to be turned on; it was rather something that could be offended, as love is offended and discipline must follow.

For all the stress in the religious passages on the mercy of God, there were still actions that men could take that would help to gain God's favour.

Let us give thanks and submit to his greatness, perchance he may be favourably disposed toward us (Memar III.5).

Submission to God, which was to be the central teaching of Islam centuries later, is a unique Samaritan emphasis in view of the fact that Samaritanism is a christocentric rather than a theocentric religion. Submission, though not urged in the Pentateuch in quite the same way as in Samaritan teaching, is a concept one step forward from the basic biblical warrant. Worship, weekday, Sabbath or festival, involved prostration before God in a manner similar to that demanded in Islam. There is considerable pressure on religious

man to 'bow down' literally and metaphorically before the infinite majesty (which involves the divine wrath) of God. But the Samaritans did not bow down only to his power and greatness; they bowed down even more willingly to his mercy! Some might think on reading through the Liturgy that the Samaritans were obsessed with this notion as part of their covenantal duty. Mercy as much as power is an awesome thing to the Samaritan.

Bearing in mind the terms of the Pentateuchal covenant and the teaching of Moses, we shall observe the nature of the belief about the prerequisites of obtaining God's favour. God's favour is not just the favourable attitude of God toward the individual worshipper and practitioner in the Law; it means something far greater, indeed something cosmic. The period of divine favour that ended with the defection of Eli at Shiloh could only return when the *whole* community was pure. But the purity required was not only ritual cleanliness and meticulous execution of the terms of the Law; it was also the response of the elect nation to God's mercy.

At one level we have the statement of Ben Manir:

He will bring nearer the days of favour when you offer the various sacrifices in the House of God (Beth-el) on the Mount (C. p. 95-29).

Even at this strictly religious level the importance of the holy mountain must not be lost sight of. A complete understanding of the Samaritan position in religious terms involves the understanding of what that mount signified. Even Markah in philosophical mood would not venture to limit the importance of the sacred mountain as the cosmic centre of the world of men. God's presence can only manifest itself for the corporate body on that mountain, a concept, based on the biblical warrant, which came in time to possess a mystical meaning. It is not possible here to enter into the two schools of thought about the sacred mountain as the centre for God's presence and as the ideal Garden of Eden, but we must take account of it when estimating the real significance of Ben Manir's remark.

At the philosophical-ethical level we have an excellent statement from Markah about what is needed by a man in order to merit God's favour. There are ten qualities necessary: holiness of thought; purity of body; true speech; well-preparedness, by which he means the prior attainment of knowledge and wisdom; considerable propriety, meaning such a depth of pure spiritual development that it is joy to carry out the divine commands; perfection of action; sincerity of

heart, practically the same, apparently, as the fear of God; perfect state of knowledge, which means knowing God and understanding logically his nature and attributes. All this in the Memar VI.6.

The man who is possessed of the necessary qualifications is deemed to have complied with the terms of the covenant and the Law in full. In Markah's thinking wisdom is a necessary corollary of the spiritual life. The man who is wise will want to be clean in body, knowledgeable, pure in heart. Thus religion and ethics and spiritual teaching merge.

A study of the consequences of the good life reveals much that is distinctive of the Samaritan outlook and confirms what has been said in this chapter about the prerequisites of receiving the divine favour. Markah states:

If you obey his commandments, he will hear your voice; if you put his words into effect, he will put the blessings into effect. If you fear him, all the peoples of the land will fear you. If you magnify his commandments, you will be exalted. If you come and submit before him, your enemy will be debased. If you open his Scripture and read therein, he will open for you the treasures of good (Memar IV.10).

The good life brings rewards, therefore, in terms of response from God, and that, in fact, means material welfare and spiritual benefit. The reference to the debasement of enemies has to be understood within the context of the Samaritans' environment. The desire, so often expressed by the Psalmist, that the enemy should be destroyed may not be Christian in outlook, but it certainly was typical of the ancient forms of Near Eastern religion!

More specifically, repentance has its rewards of a very joyous nature, says Markah:

Repentance is good! It is the gate of the Garden whose trees are excellent. Happy those who pluck from them and eat their blessings!¹ Let them partake and their Lord will care for them. All glory they will see; the wrath will be removed from them. Their Lord will be favourable toward them and their heart will rejoice evermore (Memar VI.10).

Body, mind and soul all benefit from the living of the good life. As Abul Hasan puts it:

When we carry out thine ordinances, we benefit ourselves. Our souls are once more at rest when we fulfil thine ordinances; our bodies are highly exalted when we entreat thy divine favour. Happy the world when the penitent and perfect ones come and please thy holiness (C. p. 72.10-11, 18-20).

¹ For this meaning of 'blessing', cf. Isa. 65.8 of the vine.

Thus the doing of good has its first effects on the doer, or in philosophical terms the doing of good brings about a quickening of the radiation of the light within and a higher manifestation (leading to the experience of exaltation) of it is made possible. The whole world rejoices when penitence and perfection are in evidence, for these qualities are the world at its best! This is a cosmic concept, not unlike the saying of Jesus:

There will be greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repents . . . There is joy among the angels of God over one sinner who repents (Luke 15.7, 10).

Let Markah have the last word, for he reminds us of a belief that is essential to the Christian doctrine of merit (though often overlooked). He ascribes the ultimate credit to God for the will in men to do good.

Greatness belongs to our God, who commanded for us actions for which he would give us rewards (Memar VI.2).

God's will can only decree good. God never decrees evil. Even punishment is, as we have seen, nothing but a natural consequence of action of the wrong kind. There is no sense in Samaritanism of the belief often expressed in Judaism, Christianity and Islam that God wills misfortune for good purposes. This is apparently alien to Samaritan thinking. Everything God wills must be good, whether it looks good or not! If it seems evil, harmful, then man's comprehension and evaluation of it must be wrong. We may not *know* God's will, and it may not be possible for men to find out the totality of that ultimate, but we may be sure, says the man of Samaria, that it is good. Mercy steps before judgement—always.

3 · MAN AND COMMUNITY

*My Lord, bind my spirit to the spirits of the pure ones of the world and to the spirits of the holy priests.*¹

The Samaritans were conscious of their corporate state, in two senses. They knew that they belonged with the whole human race, and that they had a unique position as the elect people of God within that human race. The latter view is familiar to all readers of the Old Testament and of the literature of Judaism in its wider aspect. The patriarchal covenants made between God and Abraham, Isaac and

¹ C. p. 77.32.

Jacob take prime place in this regard. What began physically and spiritually with the life of Abraham, himself of the line of the new race of man after the flood and the divine covenant with Noah, is continued through the chosen people of God. Judaists and Samaritans have a similar conception of vocation by election amidst the nations of the world.

All religions give stress to the need for the pure heart, but the Samaritan faith is so deeply rooted in this concept, despite the stress on bodily and ritual purity, that they may be said to have advanced their spiritual awareness in a unique way. They do not seem to have been dependent at all on Christianity or Judaism for this, but as persecution followed persecution and the race began to decline in numbers they seemed to become more and more introvert in spiritual things. Their absorption with 'inner purity', linked directly with their teaching about the pure light within, marks them in a special way. The individual must realize, as Markah urged so cogently, the real need for inner purity, but the Samaritan people as a whole had an obligation to God to worship him purely and sincerely. This wholehearted worship, about which one finds so many varied expressions throughout the Liturgy and in most of the mystical works of mediaeval times, involves the approach to God with clear conscience. This means for the Samaritan the forgiveness of sins through repentance; only then can the process of being right with God, i.e. being in a state of acceptance, begin. Dependence on God leads, in its pure expression, to sharing corporately in the sheer joy of acknowledging his mercy and righteousness. Thus the Samaritans rarely pray in a manner that suggests that God has withdrawn himself from them for a reason they cannot understand. In every case they realized that the apparent turning away of God was man-caused. Wholly absorbed by national, and to a lesser extent individual purity, their writings often savour of melancholy and tedious repetition.

There is a marked historical sense in this context. History is divided up as far as men are concerned into three periods, each having a 'root' (or rather 'new root'). Thus in the Day of Atonement liturgy we read:

Let us worship . . . by the glories of the righteous of the world, each of whom was a root . . . whence came the first father, the father of all mankind who was created from dust, and whence came the second father who built an altar and sacrificed a burnt-offering on it, and

whence came the third father who cultivated the Paradise of righteousness (C. pp. 709.34-710.3).

Adam, Noah and Abraham represented the old world, the time of the first dispensation, before God revealed himself in ultimate terms through Moses his Man, the son of his House. From the advent of Moses a new era begins in the history of the people. This concept of history is not new to Christians or Judaists, but it has a more definitely fixed place in the Samaritan scheme of things.

The whole of mankind came under the unceasing 'ownership' of God. From him comes all life; he possesses the world. The idea of the divine possession is prominent in Samaritan thinking. Tied up with their belief that God is King, this concept involves the total possession by God of men and their total involvement with and in him. From him they come and to him they go.

Thou renewest the generations of mankind and their return is to thee; from thee comes their life and in thy hand are their spirits (C. p. 491.30-31).

There is, accordingly, little emphasis in Samaritan literature on the present generation. Only in strong petitions do we find the miseries of the present being deplored, but even then within the wider context of human unhappiness and national failure to merit God's favour. Most of the liturgical material which deals with man in the corporate sense expresses itself in historical vein. All suffering springs from past national misdemeanours; all present misery reflects the failure of the people of all ages to execute the will of God.

That the Samaritan nation should be good and should be right with God is stressed over and over again, not just because it is right that it should be so, but in the quite distinctive sense that the Samaritans are the 'descendants of good men'. This is a reason frequently inculcated for the need for the good life. Markah has it:

These, then, are the good forefathers. It would not be right for us to learn from anyone but them. We must do no evil—that would not be fitting! We are the descendants of good men, all of them holy (Memar IV.6).

Markah goes on to point out how utterly wrong *in the nature of things* it would be of the Samaritans to be unlike their fathers. But what aspect of the lives of the fathers is it that makes the following of their way so imperative? Markah states some of these: Adam's praises, Enosh's proclamation (from Gen. 4.26), Enoch's way of life, Abra-

ham's righteousness, Isaac's innocence, Jacob's fearlessness, Joseph's purity, and so on. Each historical figure is marked as meritorious or accursed. In order to teach their children what the good life consists of, Samaritan teachers after Markah, perhaps also before him, taught by this historical method. Based on cause and effect, such teaching was easy to assimilate and relevant to actual circumstances in the lives of the taught. Such and such an action will, according to the laws of God, which are not all confined to ritual and statute, produce such and such an effect.

In the chapter on the means of grace (Chapter XIV, Section 2) more will be said about the meritorious forefathers; here we must note the philosophical-religious, as distinct from the strictly religious-historical approach. Markah puts it thus:

See, three have gathered the treasures of good. Noah gathered from the way of righteousness what brought sustenance to the souls whom their Lord had chosen. Enoch too opened the storehouse of righteousness and his soul fed on the provisions of eternal life. Enosh opened the storehouse of praise and called on the name of the Lord. Thus all his descendants were perfect (Memar IV.9).

Some passages demonstrate that once a 'pure origin' is created all its offspring will be *in essence* pure. Such offspring may deviate from the way, but they have innate ability to put their feet on the right path again. As we see in our study of sin, disobedience is the outstanding and fundamental cause of sin, in religious thought, and it is disobedience, i.e. refusal to act in accordance with the laws of God, whether ritual or spiritual, that spoils the pure state of those descended from the pure fathers.

O congregation, be submissive and start reproving yourselves . . . with the righteousness which is innate in you from your good ancestors (Memar III.2).

How often in the religious writings we find the descendants included in the blessing or curse on the forefather!

Consider the blessing of Noah and set your mind to learn! He said, 'And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply."' Thus he said also to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. No blessing went forth for any one of them *unless it applied both to them and to their descendants* after them (Memar III.4).

We have essentially the same concept of historical and corporate belonging in the words of Abul Hasan, which link with the statements made at the beginning of this section.

The wonder of thee thou hast manifested to the generations that have passed, as thou wilt to the generations still to come; for we pass over and away and leave the world, but thou dost endure for ever in thy greatness (C. p. 72.6-7).

We have spoken of Israel as a national or corporate entity, but the last quotation introduces us to the other concept of belonging within the wider world of humanity. The Samaritans have not overmuch to say in their literature about non-Samaritans, so preoccupied have they been with their own salvation, their own sorrows, their duty as the elect of God. Yet, what they say reveals a high degree of social consciousness in a more universal sense. They taught, as has been indicated, that all men are created with the image, impregnated with the pure light. The implications in their teaching generally, and especially in the work of Markah, are that all men are capable of being saved and led into righteousness. It is only that they did not have Moses to give them the law of God, and the Samaritans are therefore faced with almost the same problem as many Christians. What happens to those who are not the recipients of God's final revelation? Many answers have been given and are still being given to this question among Christians. Samaritans and Judaists alike would no doubt have answered the problem without difficulty by simply going forth into the world and continuing the work begun by the prophetic receipt of the revelation, but both communities fared badly in the world and it was all they could do to achieve their physical survival. Christians have been better placed for continuing the ministry of revelation and have thus been missionary in outlook, as is Islam. The Samaritans could not give the answer that Markah said they should for purely practical and political reasons. They found other ways to tackle the problem. They realized the difficulties and gave several answers to a question undoubtedly raised by themselves, the question but a reaction to the conscience of the elect.

Perhaps they were faced with the question at times as a direct result of the polemic attacks of other religionists. Whatever the origin of the question, the answers are of interest to us. One answer coming from the mediaeval period is that on the great Day of Judgment Moses will pray on behalf of all peoples; some writers go so far as to suggest that all will be saved, but not necessarily at once, nor will they all share the same abode of bliss as the true Samaritan.

In more philosophical vein, some writers following the teaching

of Markah realized that what applied to the Samaritans must also apply somehow to all men, as far as innate reactions and responses are concerned. This is to say that men are so constructed by God in his wisdom that they can choose to express God in their lives. The Samaritans have greater opportunities and therefore greater responsibilities, because of God's revelation of himself through good fathers and supremely through Moses.

A picture of man as a microcosm of total life is presented by Abraham ha-Qabazi, from whom we observe that *all* men have the same opportunities in terms of their relationship to the universe at large. There is nothing in the passage that limits the outlook to any particular religious community. The statements made are the outcome of that philosophical teaching so notable in the writings of Markah.

In a late (sixteenth-century) part of the Liturgy in the service for the Festival of Unleavened Bread¹ we read:

You are the small world (microcosm) and all who are in the wider world (macrocosm) are prepared through you. The heavens and the highest heaven are your throne; they are your head! Sun, moon and all the stars are like your eyes, rainbow² as your eyebrows! . . . The great glory is the understanding that 'orbits' within your head. The hosts of the Holy One are the spirit and soul within you. . . . The length of the days of the year are the sinews with which you are composed. . . . The mountains every one are like the ribs, each one arranged within you. Animals and vegetation are like the fruit of the womb. . . . Day and night are like the heart that is at times bright or dark. Know that your enlightened heart is greater than heaven and earth (C. p. 232.8-19).

There may be little merit in the literary figures employed and the imagery may sound alien and even crude to modern ears, but the deeper truth of man as a cosmic creature lies within. The Samaritan as a man of faith may speak of Israel, the elect of God, but as a man of thought he may speak of God and man, with Israel his elect having a special place and a special duty within that wider relationship. This last thought, so familiar from the prophets of the Old Testament in different language, is best expressed by Markah:

It is good that we know the truth and fill our heart with the instruction of knowledge, *and then teach all nations* (Memar VI.2).

¹ This is a festival separate from Passover.

² Literally 'the bow of (Noah's) covenant'.

Reference has already been made in connection with creation to the first duty of man being the praise of God, after the manner of the Shorter Catechism. Here is a passage ascribed to Markah in which this thought is involved:

In thy greatness thou didst fashion man . . . and didst put holy spirit in him. Thou didst choose him for the service of thee (C. p. 878.31-32).

XI

SIN

*Thou hast rewarded us with good, yet we thine own people have repaid thee with evil.*¹

IN THEIR THINKING about sin the Samaritans adopted two lines of thought, a traditional religious one and a philosophical. The former represented the Pentateuchal legislation brought up to date; the latter represented the philosophical point of view found in the Near Eastern wisdom literature, such as the Old Testament Book of Proverbs, the Wisdom of Ben Sirah, the teaching of Amenemope. Many statements of the sort found in these works are scattered throughout the Samaritan literature.

In this study of what the Samaritans thought about sin we shall have occasion to point out both lines of thought. At times these seem to conflict and it is possible that the Samaritans themselves at various periods were far from decisive in their thinking on the subject. Markah develops both lines of thought, without apparently being conscious of any conflict and, as we have noted, he was able to write both as a religious man and as a philosopher. Whether he succeeded in marrying the two approaches we shall only be able to judge when we have examined the subject more comprehensively. We begin by observing a few exhortations against sin and the reasons for not sinning; then we shall look into the nature of sin, motives in sinning, the historical argument, divine disfavour (its cause and effects), the effects of sin on a man, the eschatological consequences, means of expiation, forgiveness and mercy.

There is no good life except that of men who know the truth and walk in it (Memar Markah IV.5).

Markah and several mediaeval writers place great emphasis on the value of knowledge, moral knowledge, in the avoidance of sin.

¹ C. p. 4.14.

In the philosophical context they see sin as something that need not happen. The man of wisdom, unlike the thoughtless man, is a man of light who is more likely to disperse the darkness than be enveloped in it. Even the philosophers, however, can look on religious piety as something of great efficacy. The liturgist would prefer to speak of the fear of God in the traditional religious (Pentateuchal) terms, while the philosopher could see it as a form of true humility—for the man who has attained the fear of God is one who has submitted his mind—a humility that is potent in its effects on tendencies to sin. Markah puts it thus:

Wash in the trough of fear, for it is an immersion that cleanses from all uncleanness and blots out all sin (Memar IV.6).

In the next quotation from Markah's Memar we can see the religious and philosophical points of view welded together:

Happy is he who sets himself in obedience to his Lord always, who uses his will-power to remain in righteousness, for it is a power that magnifies every other power and also provides much wider scope for him who teaches. What he teaches does not therefore descend to obscenity, but enlarges the outlook of all who are of like mind (VI.6).

Submissive obedience to God is usually regarded in religious thought as one way of avoiding sin, often the chief way, but Markah thinks of obedience as essentially an act of will and the exercise of one's will for right purposes as a stimulant to other powers in man.

The basic fear (reverence) of God is the main theme of most Samaritan writings along the philosophical line.

The fear of God is a ladder whose steps are life, life-giving to those who climb them (Memar VI.6).

Men who have no holy reverence for God are in a state of darkness, and darkness to the Samaritan thinker is an expression of the state of sin. It is the antithesis of life-giving light. Men who have not humbled (disciplined) themselves in awe of the Almighty, men who have not sought knowledge of moral things, such live in darkness and have not the light of life, the life of light. The absence of the light means the presence of sin, and in the Johannine manner Markah in his great Defter poem (C. pp. 14f.) tells his readers:

On every hand there are those who bring darkness upon us, for it is the function of those who bring darkness to stir up wrath everywhere. But when the appearance of the celestial light is altered and the deep withholds its springs, wickedness finds nowhere to flow to; it goes back therefore to its own source.

I · ITS NATURE AND EFFECTS

If we think of Samaritanism as a development from the basic Pentateuchal religion and leave aside the philosophical developments, then we can with Abul Hasan speak of sin as fundamentally disobedience of God's commands as revealed through Moses in the Law, rather than some moral aberration which can be corrected by adjustments to the social environment or by the inculcation of wisdom. If we think of third- and fourth-century Samaritanism with its teaching about wisdom and the acquisition of moral knowledge, then we can say with Markah that

It is in your power to repel it from you; by keeping the statutes sin is avoided. Non-observance of them means spiritual sickness, and you will not be able to heal yourself! Preserve self-perfection (Deut. 4.9) by doing good, that you may be delivered and deliver others (Memar III.5).

The strong moral element in this teaching is applied to the fundamental Pentateuchal exhortations to keep the laws of God. Such teaching is really saying, 'Be sensible! Keep the laws and you will be in spiritual health.' The promise and the threat are together set forth when Markah says that men must not rebel against God. He goes on:

Do not be involved in evil, that you may be glorified by your Lord . . . for I would make an end of you from the world of being, and I would bring on you all kinds of cursing and put you in great affliction. But if you discipline yourself . . . you will be in the world above . . . What was promised to your fathers will be effected for you, for our Lord is merciful and pitiful (*ibid.*).

Here, too, the thought of disobedience (rebellion) is combined with the thought of self-discipline in terms of compliance, but the new element is introduced that his readers can inherit the promises God made in covenant with the forefathers, if they will keep their part of the covenantal bargain. This basic Pentateuchal thought is never forgotten by the Samaritan writer, no matter how much stress he lays on the exercise of wisdom and knowledge as means of avoiding sin.

There is the question of original sin. Did the Samaritans believe in it? In this they offer an advanced view, for they not only accept belief in original sin, but they believe that original sin is not something so inborn in men that they can never quite get rid of it. It is

death, the *outcome* of the first sin, that man inherits. As we have shown, by self-discipline and by the response to the light within, each involving obedience to God's directives, sin can be deflected. No claim is made that sin is something that can be put out of existence (except in the consummation of all things); rather the claim is that it can be made wholly ineffective in the heart and mind of the man of light, whose humble self-discipline places him in a special relationship with God. Such a way of life is response to the teaching of Moses, the Man of God.

In his commentary on Deut. 32.5 Markah describes how Adam brought death into the world for the first time by his disobedience.

What is this great change that took place in the world? Destruction through death for Adam and his descendants, affliction for Eve (Memar IV.5).

He goes on to say that no action to provoke God had taken place before that, and thus Adam was 'an evil beginning'.

In our observations on the death of Moses we had occasion to quote Moses' words:

'What can I do,' said the great prophet Moses, 'when my war is lost through the fruit that Adam ate?'

Death is inevitable because of the first sin. Thus far the Samaritan teaching about the first sin is the one traditionally accepted in the other Near Eastern religions.

Judaism has the following tradition, reminding us of Markah's description of the elements beseeching God not to let Moses die, and Moses' own admission that he must die because he was pledged by the sin of Adam.

Moses pleads for his life before God, affirming that he has committed no sin worthy of death, and God replies that he is to die because of the sin of Adam.¹

The first act of disobedience was only the beginning of a long series of such acts.

God always extends his abundant goodness and grace, but Israel is provocative (Memar IV.11).

These words might have been spoken by any of the Old Testament prophets, and in this the Samaritans fall in line with the view of the Old Testament generally. There is no direct New Testament in-

¹ Deut. Rabba 9.8.

fluence on them as far as this belief about sin is concerned. The New Testament had confirmed what the Old Testament had taught.

The Malef, representing a later, somewhat degenerate point of view, brings into Samaritanism what it had largely avoided up to mediaeval times, unlike Judaism, Christianity and later Islam; this was the principle of evil incorporate, albeit the incorporateness is a nebulous thing. The appearance of Belial as a general figure for sin comes late into Samaritan writings (except for a small number of examples¹ in connection with which no true belief is mooted).

He sinned because of Belial, who was hostile to Adam and his sons (Malef 26).

What is this Belial, this evil incorporate? Presumably Markah and Amram Darah could not have answered this question, but the Malef has its answer cut and dried:

Belial is a spirit like the angels,² but has no flesh. He entered the flesh as a breath of spirit (Malef 31).³

The passage continues by explaining that Belial entered the serpent, which was anyway the most cunning of the creatures.

A long series of sinful acts, acts of disobedience, is presented in many parts of the literature, and is used often as the argument from history, a line of teaching found in both Old and New Testaments. The special culprits, the most typical of the various categories of sin, are listed and placed in types:

1. Those whose sin of disobedience was so great that they were totally obliterated, these being the generation of the flood, the people of Sodom, the Egyptians under Pharaoh.

2. Those whose sin of disobedience was sufficiently great for God to punish them severely, so that their descendants suffered because of their sin. These were the groups of evildoers from Enoch to Lamech (a chain of evil beginning from Cain and ending with the people of the flood), the tower-builders of Babel (from Canaan to the people of Sodom), and the Reubenites.

¹ One of the most noteworthy (from Markah) is quoted below. A suggested biblical warrant is Deut. 13.13.

² In Judaism there is a tradition that Sammael, a heavenly angel, was responsible for the fall through the serpent (Pirke Rabbi Eliezer, p. 92). It is to be noted that there is no Pentateuchal warrant for any personified source of evil other than the serpent.

³ The Samaritans now equate Belial with the Arabic Shaitan (cf. Koran 7), but there is no notion of a Satan in its New Testament sense.

3. Three individual kings who acted in an arrogant manner before God—Nimrod, Pharaoh, Amalek.

4. Three otherwise righteous men who disobeyed and were 'awakened in judgement'—Judah, Simeon, Reuben.

5. Three classes who did hear, but disobeyed—the calf-makers, those who assembled before Baal-Peor, Korah and his assembly. The sin is here classified specifically as presumption.

Apply your mind to learn from these! If you behave like them, you will perish like them. Close up this collection and do not open it (ever), for the serpent and Belial¹ are contained in it. Open rather the gate of goodness and pass through it safely (Memar IV.9).

It is noteworthy that the argument from history is conceived of in two ways. (1) It demonstrates the hereditary tendencies of *the nation*, and (2) it illustrates the consequences that inevitably follow the sin of disobedience. Likewise the sin of the individual is a propensity inherited, not by some cell structure, but by observation, conscious or unconscious, within the social and national environment. This is no doubt true of all sin as judged by many religious systems, but the Samaritan stress is on the fact that original sin, openly admitted to be the cause of death and the *propensity*, not the cause, of sin, need not grip a man to destruction. No appeal is made in any fundamental sense to Moses, as in Christian belief to Christ, though that could help; the appeal is made to obedience and self-discipline on the part of the individual—in *the first instance*.

At the national level, however, the writers do not forget their place as the elect people of God under covenant. There is a danger of national sin with consequent impurity and corruption of the national life; there is a danger of the whole priestly class, if guilty of disobeying the biblical injunctions and laws, becoming unclean and thereby making the worship of the people unclean. In this context, as we shall note below, the disfavour of God toward Israel is judged. That disfavour is against the nation rather than the individual. The sins of the individual are subject to the same causes and effects, but the remedy is easier to apply. For the whole nation to be pure certainly means pure religious cult, undefiled worship and sacrifice, sincere praise, genuine petition; but it also involves national atonement. Thus the covenantal aspect of the relationship to God

¹ As early as Markah's day there did not appear to be a real distinction between the two. For Markah they are probably figurative terms, derived from the current verbiage.

receives greater stress in the national context, and the terms, on the human side, of that covenant have to be met nationally.

Ideally, as Markah saw it, the individual's overcoming of the tendency to sin opens the way to the purifying of the nation, but individual and nation alike are constantly and cogently exhorted to overcome disobedience with obedience.

Disobedience, apostasy, means in other terms deviation from the 'way of the True One' and the recompense for such deviation is expressed in the language of the argument from history—this is the most typical Samaritan form of warning.

If you deviate from the way of the True One, then what happened to the people of Sodom will happen to you (Memar Markah III.5).

Thus the nation is warned corporately, but even at the individual level the same sort of consequence is given, but expressed in different language:

He who makes himself an enemy to God enters into the curse in this world and will suffer retribution in the next (Memar III.9).

This different language we refer to poses another question. The condemnation of the national sin is set out in the traditional manner, based on the biblical pattern, but more often than not the condemnation of the individual's sin, albeit the same sin in essence, allows for greater scope of expression and belief. The individual goes to heaven or hell in the end; the nation does not come into such a category of opposites. The nation itself is rarely thought to have a corporate future in the sense that all its members will go to one or other of the two alternatives. What the Samaritans do believe about the national reward and recompense or punishment is that the pure, righteous members of the community will belong together and live together in the state of future bliss, but many will suffer condemnation. This is similar to the expressed view of Judaism and Christianity (leaving aside the question of possible universal salvation, which never became a hard and fast doctrine in either religion), but the Samaritans do not usually think, as the post-Pentateuchal parts of the Old Testament put it, that the righteous members of the nation who are to be rewarded by bliss are an elect 'remnant'. They thought too much about cause and effect, and it is at this stage in our study that we may realize how much the philosophical attitude affected the traditional religious belief. The same or similar ideas are to be found

scattered throughout the literature of Judaism, but Judaism has not formally and finally adopted the Samaritan point of view on this question. Undoubtedly belief is the fundamental thing in Samaritanism, but it is belief modified by experience. If a man does wrong socially, then the consequences are fixed. In the light of this natural law of cause and effect the national sin is assessed. It is because of this line of reasoning that they came to the conclusion about the era of divine disfavour, a subject to be examined later.

Markah reasons with his readers (the descendants of the hearers of Moses' exhortations) that disobedience is sheer folly. He does not speciously reiterate the old familiar religious arguments, for he found what to him was a better method of approach.

O congregation, why on earth do you make yourself devoid of all this (blessing) and forsake the light and walk in the darkness, and let the foreigner have a powerful grasp upon you?

Why are you hungry when there is a 'dish' set before you containing all glory?

Why are you a slave, when you were appointed for rulership . . .?

Sin is folly; it is pointless! There is no gain in it, only loss. Even at the national level, Markah the philosopher sees sin as an unnecessary foolishness. What are the motives that are responsible for such results? What makes people throw away blessing and light? Markah has an answer and basically the reason he gives is that people disobey, or, putting it less positively, they do not obey.

The impression might be gained from what has been said that sin is no more than disobedience of God, though it could be regarded by some as no more than simple folly. However, Markah makes it abundantly clear in Book III of his *Memar* that a sinful action cannot be fairly and reliably assessed unless account is taken of the motives underlying it. This was a subject that was of considerable concern to the compilers of parts of the Old Testament, and even more so to writers of independent studies of sin in later Judaism. Similarly the New Testament introduces stress on motive of action, and some of the Christian Fathers were occupied with the considerable problems involved in assessing the seriousness of any given sin. In view of all this, we would expect the Samaritans to have given deep thought to the question of motive in action, so that any given sin could be properly evaluated and graded. Indeed, they did so, and it is of great interest to all students of theology and ethics to have at their disposal a new corpus of material on the subject from

early times. We cannot study the subject in any comprehensive or even detailed way here, but we shall point out the essential elements in the Samaritan concepts of motive in action. In the chapter on ethics we shall have more to say about motive.

Markah, after the fashion of Lev. 19 and other parts of the Law, laid down categories of sinful action and attached to them a judgement on their degree of liability. Building his examination on the classes of sinners condemned in Deut. 27, he sets out the various sorts of sinful acts that place a man under the curse. He contrasts the blessing and the curse, as states of moral bliss and moral death respectively, in terms of those who come under them. For example, here are some acts that place a man in a state of accursedness, which is what 'being under the curse' means; starting with Deut. 27:24 ('Cursed be he who slays his neighbour in secret'), he gives the following list:

He who lies await for someone on the way in order to strike him down like an accursed serpent enters into the curse.

He who attacks his neighbour in secret or drives him from his belief passes under the curse.

He who sees his neighbour go in a wrong way and does not bring him back comes under the curse.

He who knows that his neighbour is going in the path of a dangerous wild beast and does not tell him, deserves the curse for that, and is responsible for his sin. His Lord is angry with him and he will never pardon him.

These examples out of many demonstrate something of the considerable advances made in the field of ethics. Bearing in mind that they are all classed with the action condemned in Deut. 27:24, we can make some assessment of the Samaritan viewpoint. It is at once apparent that the Samaritans have done some hard thinking about sin, its nature, cause, motive, consequence, etc. Here we have no mere legalistic compilation such as is found in Judaism (although Judaism contains many excellent studies, too!) of the same or approximate period. The Samaritan ethic at once becomes comparable with the Christian. In this respect Samaritanism had nothing to borrow from Islam in later centuries, for it had long since fashioned its outlook on sin in a most advanced way.

It is to be noted that the driving of a man from his belief is regarded as just as serious a sin as attacking him secretly in a physical way. Destroying a man's faith or belief is every bit as bad as destroying his body, and in this we at once think of the teaching of Jesus

recorded in Matt. 10.28, where the destruction of the soul is regarded as far more serious than the destruction of the body alone. Similarly Markah asserts that *not* saving a man from mortal danger is just as guilt-laden an act as actually destroying him by one's own hand.

If we were to work through all the sections in the Memar, we would find a large collection of examples of positive acts and failures to act that are classed with such acts as those condemned in Deut. 27. The Samaritans were able to pinpoint the motive and assess action by that motive, a process that makes us at once admire their moral acumen. From this we see that the Samaritans did not become so obsessed with the meticulous observance of the details of the Law (though they never overlooked these) that they sank into moral turpitude as far as acts not condemned in the Law are concerned.

Yet we must state that the ethic of Markah is not entirely a matter of *religious* development. Undoubtedly the development of philosophical ideas and ideals among the Samaritans in the Hellenistic and Roman periods led to a re-examination of the older religious code of laws. That they were successful in applying their ethical 'discoveries' to the religious laws gave them a spiritual strength which alone could account for their developed conceptions about man, sin and the world.

We turn from the brief observations on motive to some specific examples of the effects on the individual of his actions. In principle, Markah and his followers believed that the chief effect was a self-punishment—as well as the leading of a man on the way to judgement on the last day. The emphasis on the individual side is on self-destruction, on the corporate side on loss of divine favour, the latter being a subject for further study below. The passage now quoted from the Memar, dealing with Moses' address to Pharaoh at the Red Sea, could be regarded as a Samaritan classic on this topic.

If it was your intention to make encounter (with Israel), make encounter with the various judgements that will bring you increasing destruction. He whom you seek is coming out to meet you! God is too righteous for you in what he does to you! You slay yourself—you are your own enemy. Your own words have become your destroyer. In truth, from the sowing of evils comes a harvest of thorns (II.4).

So 'he who walks in evil, the sole of his foot will stumble' (IV.11), a typical 'wisdom' statement, represents the state of consciousness induced in a sinner once he has embarked on the course of sin. This is a

law of cause and effect in psychological terms, and not a *lex talionis* (eye for eye, tooth for tooth). Pharaoh, it is made clear in other passages, had already brought about his own destruction because of 'the mind that was in him', not simply through the acts he committed. The wrong motive (aggrandizement) created a series of acts that brought into operation the inevitable laws of effect.

In the majority of cases, however, the effects of sin are described in terms of how God views it. Markah can speak after different fashions on the subject, and it will suffice if we observe two typical statements from his Memar, the first from a moralist point of view, the second from the traditional religious one.

Woe to a man whose sin pursues him! Your enemy is your actions, your sword your words. Woe to a man whose own guilt slays him, whose word is his sword punishing him (IV.11).

The emphasis on *self*-punishment gives way to the emphasis in many passages on *divine* recompense. So

A man who has wealth and does not give out what I command him—I will exact vengeance on him and destroy all he possesses (III.6).

In the mediaeval period the emphasis, for the most part, is on the direct recompense by God and little is said by way of self-punishment, but that the later Samaritans were still able to speak of sin without mentioning God's vengeance is seen in many passages in the didactic poems, which comprise a kind of 'wisdom' literature. It is noticeable, however, that the mediaeval Samaritans did not advance their thinking on the philosophical and ethical side beyond the position attained by Markah, and indeed there was a return to the more traditional religious terminology, based on the Pentateuchal manner of condemning sin. Thus the Day of Atonement Liturgy lists such sins as lying, oppressing, robbery, hatred, slander, ignorance, rebelliousness, terrorizing, wine-bibbing, uncleanness, presumption and impatience (in that order) as sins that caused God to withdraw his favour from Israel. The later Samaritans often wrote in this manner, blaming the period of divine disfavour they were undergoing on the sins of the community. In the mediaeval world, when there was a revival in the study of the Law, many of the ideas and teachings of Markah were forgotten or laid aside, and we find scant mention of the individual as sinner. It was, therefore, solely due to Markah that the Samaritans adopted the twofold attitude to sin which we mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

At the corporate level Markah broadly divides the 'enemies of God' amongst the Israelites into three categories:

Those whom he instructed, and they did not want to learn;

Those whom he called and they did not heed (for various reasons);

Those who actually rebelled against the will of God.

All these suffer the supreme condemnation. But Markah takes account also, as we have seen, of sins of omission, and he makes allowance for those whose sin was committed in ignorance, an allowance made also in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In the case of a man who is in a place of desolation and does not realize his position, turn him from that place.

In the case of a man who utters statements which he does not understand and he suffers reproach, turn him to the truth.

In the case of a man who is caught in his guilt and who does not realize the significance of it, turn him from his way (of acting) (Memar Markah III.6).

These and many more are categories of sinners who are not held responsible and liable. These do not suffer the total condemnation, but Markah goes on to point out that if any of these classes will not listen to counsel and change their ways, 'God will be their judge'. They will be removed from the state of blessedness to the state of accursedness.

But what about the totally hardened and incurable sinners? Can anything be done for them? Markah and almost every writer after him, on the analogy of the lessons of history, treat them as beyond salvation. However, let us observe what exactly is the nature of their sin. Markah was writing an exegesis of Deut. 32.21; we note the tone of regret in his writing, as follows:

They have provoked me with their shameful acts. They have defiled my dwelling, have profaned my holiness . . . they have multiplied their presumptuous behaviour before me. . . .

How can I recompense them with good acts or hear a cry from them, or answer them in their distress in the world? I called them: they did not come! I taught them: they remained ignorant! I honoured them: they rebelled! I treated them well: they behaved disgracefully! In view of all this, how can I have pity for them? How can I be concerned for them?

When they forsook me, I forsook them. When they spurned me, I parted from them. I recompense every doer according to what he has done (Memar IV.12).

He makes it clear enough in many passages that everything possible is done to save men from the due consequences of their

deeds, no matter how bad these have been. In the mediaeval thought some writers postulated the belief that even on the Day of Vengeance and Recompense Moses would pray for the worst of sinners, those who had merited a place in the eternal fire, and would succeed. In the mainstream of Samaritan thought, however, such sinners as have been noted immediately above are beyond hope, beyond the proffered mercy of God.

This leads us to another thought, one with which the Samaritans were ever preoccupied. This is the thought of what form the consequences for unforgiven and unforgivable action would take.

2 · THE DIVINE DISFAVOUR

*We weep for you, O Israel, how once you were in the days of God's favour, and now you are in the time of God's disfavour!*¹

Like the sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritans believed in an era of divine disfavour and an era of divine favour. In the Introduction to the book we placed these eras in the historical framework. These were called respectively *panuta* (turning-away) and *rahuta* (favour). It was believed that when the first sin was committed, sins abounded thereafter, so that God had to do away with the generation of men at the time of the flood. An era of disfavour ended with the landing of Noah and his family on land, on the purified land uncovered by the subsidence of the flood waters. The new dispensation continued through the times of the Patriarchs till the period of Israel's new life in Canaan, when Eli defected in the time of High Priest Uzzi and turned many of the people against the true worship. The new period of divine disfavour thus inaugurated is, it is believed, to continue until the advent of the Taheb, who will prepare the world for the general resurrection and the Day of Judgement.

It is possible that Zoroastrian religion influenced the Samaritans in their evaluation of history, for that religion had a concept of four periods of three thousand years each when there was opposition between light and darkness. The Samaritans sometimes describe their eras of favour and disfavour as periods of light and darkness respectively. In their view the history of the lower world spans six thousand years from creation till the coming of the Taheb, and there are altogether four periods of alternate favour and disfavour from the time of the new dispensation in Noah's generation.

¹ Durran, C. p. 46.27-28.

There is also a belief in a mystical source of knowledge about the secrets of these eras. The Commentary to Chronicle I on II.7 speaks of the Book of the Signs which was given to Adam containing the secrets of 'days of favour and of the elect of Jacob Israel'. However, it would be unjustified to claim that such belief in secret books had any significance in the wider theological scheme. The Mandaeans have their secret books of Adam,¹ but no direct relationship between the Mandaean and Samaritan ideologies can be demonstrated.

The Samaritan attitude to the prevailing period of divine disfavour is reflected in two ways. One is that they recognized their own sinful state, as demonstrated by the environment in which they lived, to be the cause. That environment was one of persecution, famine, drought, etc. They were driven back upon themselves in an introspective way more and more, especially throughout the Roman and Byzantine persecutions of the Judaists and themselves, and throughout the terrible events wrought by invasions and plagues in the Middle Ages. This first attitude, constantly reflected in the liturgies, was not analytical. It was simply a judgement on effects that proved a sinful cause.

On the other hand, we find a critical appraisal of the situation reflected in commentaries and chronicles. This was that they made a serious attempt to understand what exactly it was that brought the disfavour of the Lord upon them. They came to realize that God had to withdraw himself from them because they were not pure. Their religious worship was a defiled worship; their beliefs were too shortsighted, too confined. They began to think more comprehensively about their history, in much the same way as the exiled Hebrews in Babylonia after 586 BC. The Hebrew exiles (later Judaists) eventually developed a hedge around the Law and took extreme measures and precautions to obviate any possible national impurity. Thus Ezra put an end to marriage between Hebrew (Judaean) and Gentile. So the Mishnah records many of the legalistically devised notions about sin and the avoidance of sin (defilement), notions that brought about a wrathful reaction from Jesus.

The Samaritans took a different line, no doubt because of their very different background. They had been already immersed in Neo-Platonic, Stoic, Gnostic and Christian ideas for centuries, and when the great fourteenth-century revival took place it was a revival in terms of the Law, not a second law (*mišnah*) as in the case of the

¹ Edn. by Lady E. S. Drower, *The Secret Adam, a Study in Nasorean Gnosis*, 1960.

Judaists. They placed no hedge around the Law; indeed, they re-examined it carefully and reinterpreted it in the light of more advanced thinking, thinking largely due to Markah and his contemporaries a thousand years before.

The outcome of this attempt was that the philosophical approach, so natural in Markah's day, gave way to some extent before the traditional religious approach. That approach, so far as sin is concerned, was not restricted to Pentateuchal modes of thought—after all, it was a revival! Much of the thinking of Markah and his contemporaries went into it, but the framework was now the religious one. The history of Israel, the traditions of its priesthood, could now be assessed as developments after the time of the First Kingdom. Hence the notion developed that Noah represented the end of one era and beginning of another—there was biblical warrant for this—and the lifetime of Moses was subjected to more and more study from the comprehensive standpoint. Hence many traditions not derived from the Law or from Markah found their way into the new literature, traditions about his birth, traditions about his death, traditions which Christian-wise brought new light to bear on his mission.

In this regard the doctrine of the divine favour and disfavour and of the Day of Vengeance and Recompense—a doctrine by no means disregarded by Markah—became subject to still further development, undoubtedly with the aid of some Islamic ideas. Though we can find parallels to many details of the belief about the latter in the New Testament—close parallels—we cannot but observe the shift of emphasis on the subject of punishment. The Day of Vengeance becomes a spectre haunting the mediaeval Samaritan mind, as it did the Muslim for centuries.

Before we remark on the future consequences for the sinful people, let us observe the consequences more closely as far as the world is concerned. This is where we have to examine the belief about divine disfavour, to see what form that disfavour took. We have hinted at the causes already, and now we may specify more precisely how the Samaritans, of all periods, described it.

We begin with Markah once more, for he did not neglect to stress the fact of divine disfavour in the world. In the first quotation Markah is commenting on Deut. 32.16, and we can observe some of the causes set forth that were typical of such an era of disfavour. He is describing the period when people like the Sodomites and Tower-Builders lived.

With abominable practices they provoked him to anger, at a declining period when there was no propriety, a period during which abominable practices appeared, when there were no good children, a period wholly of evildoing, without truth or righteousness (Memar IV.5).

A more precise picture of the Roman period is presented in Book IV, Section 11, based on the statement of Deut. 32.30, which he says 'refers to us'!

We have no army, no king, no prince, no sword, bow, spear or shield, and we have no one to pray for us, no priest to make atonement for us.

In Book VI, Section 6, he both mentions the sins of the Israelites of his day and gives a brief picture of the desolation of the era.

How long will you be chastened for evildoings? If they were praises, they would be evil! How long sins, how long omission, how long accursedness, how long fathers begetting children not their own? How long vineyards planted without having any exchange value? How long will your cattle be slaughtered and all your beasts plundered by our enemies before your very eyes?

All this is the penalty for the doing of the evil you have committed and for your haste in committing it!

These are descriptions of the Roman period, and we can only guess at the exact situation prevailing to bring about such expressions of anguish. Yet, despite the anguish he felt, Markah made it clear that the sufferers had no one to blame but themselves.

The mediaeval and modern literature, especially the Liturgy, merely presents more anguish and more graphic pictures of the same ilk, but there is more introspection, more repetitious condemnation of Israel. There is no need for us to multiply examples. The Roman era, the Arab, the Turkish—as far as Samaritan national suffering is concerned, it is all the same!

Another aspect of the turning away of the divine favour is that the divine presence (Shekhinah) is removed from the sacred Mount Gerizim. Judaism has a tradition about the Shekhinah that somewhat resembles the Samaritan concept of divine favour. According to this,¹ the Shekhinah had been vouchsafed to Adam, but when he disobeyed God's command it departed from the world. It returned only in the time of the tabernacle. Thus we may have here some correspondence with the Samaritan belief in a period of favour up to the time of Saul, Samuel and Eli. According to this Judaist tradition the removal of the Presence was applied only in general terms,

¹ Num. Rabba 12.6.

for divine appearances to individual men continued after the time of the fall of Adam. Thus Judaism and Samaritanism agree, in their respective terms, as far as the extent of the departure of the Presence is concerned. It was a national, rather than an individual disaster.

O my people, awaken from your sleep! Behold what lies before you and consider your future. Perhaps you may not accept reproof, although your sin is great. It is indeed exceedingly serious and is of your own doing.

What is the evil you have done? You have made your wickedness quite plain, for you are a stubborn people, rebellious ever since the day of your birth. You will only realize what you have been about after the day of your death! You will not be conscious of it till the day you stand before your Lord, when your evil-doing will be laid bare.

He will ask you about something. What will be your reply? You will cry out and expostulate, but the Law will answer your expostulation, 'Where is your faith?' Moses will ask, 'Where is my tabernacle? Have you concealed it by your idolatry? Where are my statutes and ordinances? Where is your observance? Where are my laws, where your wisdom? Where are my commandments, where your understanding?' An angel of God will make proclamation. You will be compelled to listen! 'You have destroyed my (God's) dwelling-place, the site of your worship. You have profaned my sanctuary, your holy place. It will be to your advantage to repent and say, "Turn from thy fierce wrath, my Lord, in thy pity"' (C. p. 502.7f.).

Thus the picture presented by the mediaeval writer Abisha in the Day of Atonement Liturgy. We must next give consideration to expiation and atonement, forgiveness and mercy, and the means of grace available to all to help them overcome sin, the consequences of which Abisha has all too graphically portrayed. We finish with a proverb attributed to the unknown Ben Eden:

In proportion to the action is the reward (Memar Markah IV.3).

XII

THE APPROACH TO GOD

*May I AM THAT I AM, gloriously holy, disperse over you this day the clouds of forgiveness!*¹

THE APPROACH OF man, particularly Samaritan man, to his God is at once a simple and complicated matter. It is simple when it is enough to say that a man should approach his God with humble and contrite heart. It is much more complicated when approach to God is only possible if a man has obeyed a large number of ritual, ceremonial and moral laws. In the case of the Samaritan religion there is a twofold attitude to the approach to God. At one level, best exemplified by Markah and some of the didactic writers of the mediaeval period, the humble and contrite heart will receive the balm of forgiveness. At another level, that of the conservative, priestly Samaritan, purity of body and soul are the essential prerequisites before approaching the altar. In between the two there are many writers who seem to combine both attitudes without apparently having worked out possible contradictions.

Before we comment on the various factors involved in the approach to God, let us observe that the Samaritans of all periods, without exception, assumed the essential doctrine that God is merciful. This Pentateuchal statement (Ex. 34.6) is quoted and commented on in a multitude of passages. We could justifiably say that the Samaritans, every bit as much as the Muslims, made this belief one of the cardinal factors of spiritual living. It was because of this belief that life was possible. Would not God otherwise have destroyed a sinful people long ago? The fact that he did not do so was not only due to his faithful carrying out of his side of the covenant; it was *primarily* due to his nature of love and pity.

If we assume, and we are right to do so, that ritual and bodily purity are prerequisites for approaching God, then we may list th

¹ C. p. 657.28.

items involved as follows: purity of the sanctuary, purity of the sacred mount, of every article associated with the tabernacle and the mount, of worship, of body, of clothes; purity of the priesthood, perfect copying of the Law, perfect observance of every Pentateuchal statute and ordinance. These are the chief items involved on the ritual side. On the social side, it was necessary to a right state to have loved one's neighbour, helped the poor, the orphan and the widow, to have aided the stranger and sojourner, guided the miscreant, instructed the youth, and so on. Duty to one's fellows was regarded as of basic importance, even in the eyes of writers who placed their stress on the ritual requirements. There is no need for us to quote examples of the various factors of purity and duty here; the majority of them would amount to quotations more or less direct from the Law. It is important at this point to recognize that the Samaritans did not in any detail exclude from prerequisites of the approach to the divine anything that was enjoined in the Law. Full obedience to God could be taken for granted.

The greatest possible care was taken that the worship should be scrupulously pure and that the great festivals should be observed in strict accordance with the requirements of the Law. Indeed, we know that until late mediaeval times the Samaritans still used the ashes of the red heifer in connection with the waters of impurity.¹ Every detail of correct clothing, every precaution against such defilement as could be caused by contact with a corpse or with a Gentile or with any form of dirt, every minute item of daily living—all these and more had to be scrutinized over and over again to ensure that nothing could bring impurity to a man when he approached the altar of God, or even if he simply prayed privately to his God in his own home.

The most outstanding event in the Samaritan calendar was the Day of Atonement. This, the greatest of the Seventh Month festivals, was regarded as an occasion of great joy, despite the many repetitious expressions of contrition that marked the day. The correct observance of the rules for that day, laid out in the Pentateuch, was impossible in times when no temple sacrifices existed, but as the Karaite put it 'Praise (*šebah*) takes the place of sacrifice (*zebah*)'. So the Samaritans learned to experience the blessed forgiveness of God through prayer and praise constituting the act of atonement. Here, however, we begin to realize the deeper element contained in the

¹ See further J. Bowman, 'Did the Qumran Sect burn the Red Heifer?' in *Revue de Qumran* 1, July 1958, pp. 73-84.

belief about forgiveness. The Samaritans had inherited, as the Judaists had, a religious cult which had to be reinterpreted in terms of a perfect and valid substitute for sacrifice, but they knew that a man could be contrite on the Day of Atonement and a presumptuous rogue a week or a month later. Hence the idea gained favour over the centuries that the Day of Atonement, though primarily a corporate institution, whose efficacy pertained to the nation in former times, had inestimable value for the individual in times when there could be no sacrifice on the great altar.

As the Wisdom teaching of the Samaritans developed and the philosophical teaching of their own thinkers and those of other communities found a place in their outlook, they began to attribute increasing importance to the study of ethics. As a result, they developed greater insight in moral thinking and began to see the individual as a microcosm of the nation. The advancement of such thinking gave depth to the ethic and it became the highlight, as it were, in the spiritual outlook of the Samaritans. The ritual regulations continued as before, and indeed continue to this day, but in the greatest periods of religious development and literature it is transparent that Samaritanism was becoming an ethical as well as a ritualistic religion.

Belief was no longer enough! Practice became more and more the essence of progress in spiritual living. It no longer sufficed to give credence to certain articles of doctrine and to perform the statutory laws of the Pentateuch. The moral awakening had a quickening effect on Samaritan thinking, and when we study the various elements in the approach to God and in the means of grace (in the next chapter), we can observe that there is a ritual and a moral side to be considered. This is what we have to note as we proceed, else we shall fail to give a fair estimate of the Samaritan belief about approaching God.

Expiation and atonement we can take for granted, as far as the prerequisites are concerned. These after all represent the biblical and hence older side of the religion, just as they do in Judaism. The various moral emphases which gradually coloured these prerequisites seem to belong to the same realm of outlook as that found in Christianity, where indeed to a considerable extent the older ritual requirements gave way before the prerequisites of the new covenant first explicitly expounded by Jeremiah and brought to maturity in the teaching of Christ.

Granted that a man is ritually and physically clean and that he has executed the biblical commandments, his state of mind when approaching God became a matter of vital import. The Samaritans developed all sorts of new literary and liturgical expressions on the theme of repentance and penitence. They do not seem to have differentiated much between these last two, but regarded them in the main as but two stages in contrition. Penitence is the *state* of contrition and is manifested at an emotional level; repentance is the outward *sign* of penitence and represents the intention of the penitent to put himself right with God. When we consider the appeal to God, which is but an aspect of the approach to God, we find penitence the dominant theme everywhere. Some might feel that the Samaritans were preoccupied with this emotion to a nauseating degree, but this preoccupation was greatest in times of national disaster, times of persecution, of drought, of famine, of plague. We can actually explain many mediaeval poems in terms of particular events, the Black Death having been one of the most devastating. In times of comparative peace and freedom from calamity, the Samaritans were probably no more religious at heart than any other nation, though they always kept up with scrupulous care the biblical requirements, festivals, and so on.

Something of the nature of true penitential and repentant states is gained from a study of Markah and the Liturgy and the Commentaries, where there is a considerable amount of teaching on the subject. The first element we may note is that of submission; Markah puts it this:

Be submissive and start reproving yourself . . . in righteousness (Memar III.2).

In this particular context he addresses the congregation as if it were an individual. He speaks of 'the righteousness that is innate in you from your good ancestors', not thereby meaning an inherited righteousness, for in other passages he states that it is righteousness by example. It is inborn in them, he says, to lead the righteous life; they are not compelled 'inwardly or outwardly' to 'realize' it, for it is something that is activated only by one's own will.

Markah states the simple truth of the matter when he teaches that God pardons when a man repents, and that he has no favourable dealings with a man whose attitude of mind is insincere.

Know that he is merciful and pitiful. He does not accept the guilty till they repent (Memar III.5).

A rather remarkable statement by the same author places the matter in a different light, for he taught that it was because God was merciful that men could repent. This statement is as follows:

Greatness belongs to God, who forgives sins and rolls them away in his mercy, *so that men can repent* (Memar IV.2).

In other words, men do not repent simply as some personal, capricious act of mind. It is because of the appeal of God that there can be the appeal to God. It is because God demonstrates love and mercy that it becomes meaningful and worthwhile for men to make the sacrifice of repentance. In studying the will of God we stated that the Samaritans regarded it as something wholly belonging to God, something beyond the comprehension of men. If God manifests mercy it is his act and his alone; it cannot be brought into being simply because men feel sorry for themselves. Indeed, the whole of Samaritan teaching on the subject of repentance and forgiveness is impregnated with the concept that God's mercy pertains wholly to his will and with the belief that man's penitent state has no meaning of itself.

Yet there is an apparent contradiction to this. In scores of passages from the available literature the Pentateuchal teaching about Moses' prayer turning away the wrath of God is stressed. The emphasis on this is immense! Let Markah voice the matter:

God says *That I may consume* (Ex. 32.10), but Moses, his Man, prays and says *Turn from thy fierce wrath* (verse 12). By reason of this prayer God 'repents' of all the affliction which threatened to take place (Memar IV.8).

Some may argue that this outlook is an example of the Samaritan snatching at a straw and there may be an element of truth in the argument, for this belief in the efficacy of the prayer of Moses seems out of keeping with the mainstream of belief about God's will and mercy. Admittedly the prayer of Moses is Pentateuchal and therefore inherited by the Samaritans. What could they do with such a prominent prayer, a prayer of such efficacy? They could not ignore it. Far from ignoring it, they built up upon it a doctrinal frame, whereby they brought upon themselves considerable difficulty. They have to regard God's will as something inscrutable (after the later Islamic fashion), and they have to elevate Moses' status with God in their unique way. The Samaritans are caught between these two fires. They did not resolve the problem by any explicit statements

of explanation, but we can say that they took it for granted that God's will was God's own affair, and if he saw fit under certain circumstances to redirect his planned action (which is what 'repents' means in the last quotation), it was not for men to judge.

Perhaps the best explanation of the matter in other terms lies in the teaching of Markah that God's mercy is subject to his will and may not, for all men know, last for ever. Thus Markah exhorts the would-be repenters to hasten—*now* is the accepted hour!

Do not delay coming (to God), else you may be rejected and not find him who would take you by the hand, and when you repent repentance will not avail you (Memar IV.10).

It is always *possible* that God will change his mind. No man can be sure that he will not!

Speaking of the Day of Atonement Abisha, too, is conscious that there may be a time when repentance will be too late.

Who can ride in the ship of this day, unless he be righteous and blameless like Noah and those with him in the ark? The ark of Noah escaped from the flood when the flood subsided.

Likewise, the ark of this day provides an escape for those in it (C. p. 500),

but not, we may take it, for those who are not observing the Day of Atonement!

There is one class of sinner whose crime is so heinous that forgiveness is out of the question. In this one belief, held even by Markah, the Samaritans were consistent, and in this they differ from the Judaists. The sinners who invite special and utter destruction are the type of the calf-makers, the tower-builders, the Pharaoh-ites. According to Judaism,¹ God goes as far as possible that his mercy may be employed and not his justice (recompense). The Samaritans do not infer from Gen. 18.20f., as Judaism does,² that God opened the door of repentance to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

On the subject of the penitent and repentant heathen, Samaritan writers have little to say. There is certainly an inchoate doctrine of universal(ly applied) salvation, but if we are to judge by fully developed doctrines we must conclude that the Samaritan view would be that the heathen who turned to God in the right manner and with the right attitude would have been led to his new state and action by the study of the Law—how else could he know the True

¹ See Moore, *Judaism* I, pp. 528f.

² Gen. Rabba 49.6, etc.

One?—and therefore he would be a proselyte. Such a one must be a *Shamer*, a 'keeper of the law' and therefore a Samaritan. The possibility of the conversion of the heathen has its warrant in Deut. 10.17, and this, in fact, is the chief verse quoted by those writers who imply that salvation is not limited to Israel.

The approach to God is often expressed in terms of a gate or door being opened by God for the forgiven sinner to enter. Indeed, all the means of grace are capable of being described as gateways through which men may pass on their way to God. It is noteworthy that Samaritanism conceives of the opening of the gate of forgiveness in two ways, a traditional, religious way as expressed above, in which it is God who opens the gate of his own accord (will), and a philosophical, in which it is man whose state of mind and heart causes the hinges of the gate to move, so that it swings open to his touch. In Judaism, the first aspect is the only one noticeably asserted, for God is ever anxious (according to some Rabbis overanxious!) to open the gate of forgiveness. The typical Judaist attitude, however, is well expressed thus:

If you repent, I will receive you and judge you favourably, for the gates of heaven are open.¹

In Samaritanism the responsibility is almost wholly on man, but God helps man to be pure, as we have shown.

We turn now to the broader subject of prayer, in order to see what this approach to God meant for the Samaritan. A few words about the practice of prayer will suffice here in an introductory way, before we turn to the question of the nature, meaning and efficacy of prayer.

The *Malef* (178) tells us that

The ordinance about prayers is a command obligatory on every Samaritan Israelite twice every day, evening and morning.

Question 179 Why do these times have greater value than daytime and night-time?

Answer 179 Because they are the times of the morning offering and the evening offering.²

Although this attitude is typical of the mediaeval and modern periods rather than of the Roman and Byzantine era, Amram

¹ *Pesikta* (ed. Buber), fol. 156 b, quoted by Moore, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 530.

² Cf. Ex. 29.39. The examples of Abraham (Gen. 19.27) and Isaac (Gen. 24.63) are quoted for the biblical warrant.

Darah seems to reveal that such an attitude obtained in this day, too.

In the evening and the morning the angels of the Lord are present in every place (or worship).¹

It is at once evident that prayer is an essential and vital feature of the attainment of forgiveness and salvation, as it is in the other Near Eastern religions, but the Samaritan ideas about prayer have never been adequately studied, and there is much to interest us in the way that it is expressed. We are not speaking of prayers of thanksgiving and acknowledgement or even intercession, for these, broadly speaking, follow the pattern for such prayers in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We speak of petitions. A brief observation of Markah's teaching about the spirit in which prayer should be uttered will set the picture clear for us.

Come with us! Let us wholeheartedly make petition. Let us worship sincerely before him like Adam when he was afraid, like Enoch when he was obedient, like Enosh when he proclaimed, like Noah when he submitted himself, like Abraham when he was tested, like Isaac when he was bound, like Jacob when he was in affliction, like Joseph when he fled,² like Moses when he hid,³ like Aaron when he was silent, like Eleazar when he was faithful, like Phinehas when he was zealous for God—perchance we may repent, bringing to light the divine will and hiding away the divine disfavour, submitting in righteousness, obedient to what God has commanded (Memar III.2).

Obviously Markah had studied the subject carefully and had isolated those elements in the right attitude of the true penitent petitioner that stand out as prerequisite. Any man who could possess all the spiritual qualities represented in that list would obviously be a sure candidate for God's acceptance.

Markah also teaches that certain types of prayer are not efficacious. One of these is the prayer for those in evil:

If the prophet Moses were to pray for us when we were in evil, his prayer would not be accepted, for the prayer of the righteous on behalf of the sinner while he is yet in his sin is not efficacious (Memar III.9).

¹ See the chapter on angels (Chapter XX) for the explanation of this passage. Note also that the last two quotations refer to evening before morning—the normal Semitic practice (cf. Gen. 1.5, etc.).

² I.e. from the wife of Potiphar (Gen. 39.12); thus the quality commended is purity.

³ I.e. after he slew the Egyptian (Ex. 2.15); thus the quality commended is fear.

So Abraham prayed for Abimelech, a righteous man, and his prayer was accepted.¹ So Moses prayed on behalf of Pharaoh, a sinful man, and his prayer was not accepted.

Similarly,

Prayer is not acceptable unless it comes from a heart full of penitence. If we pray with heart adulterated with another god (e.g. Mammon), the prayer is not accepted and the petition not answered (Memar VI.8).

There is positively no room for the sacramentalist point of view in Markah's teaching. The hard and fast rule about prayer is that the one who prays must have the right spirit.

Markah stresses elsewhere (Memar IV.1) the special value of Sabbath prayer—every Samaritan writer, like his Judaist brother, does—because the Sabbath is a time when man has more chance of being in the right frame of mind. He is not preoccupied with the toil and responsibilities of daily living, and he reads portions of the Law which direct his attention along spiritual lines of great importance. On the Sabbath day, according to Markah, there are four elements in the prayers that can be classified: (1) the prayer that brings healing (cf. Gen. 20.17), (2) the prayer of Isaac (cf. Gen. 25.21), (3) the prayer that removes wrath (cf. Ex. 32.12), and (4) the whole Sabbath prayer itself. Such prayers, based on patriarchal experience, if uttered in the right spirit, are specially efficacious—because of that experience. They are types and not prayers for repetition. The need behind each is set out in the biblical account in each case, and these needs are necessary to efficacious prayer. This Sabbath prayer was conceived of as replacing the age-old Sabbath sacrifices long since discontinued. The High Priest Phinehas of the fourteenth century expressed the thought thus:

We offer sacrifices before the Lord on the altar of prayers. In place of the Sabbath offering,² we sanctify ourselves and praise and proclaim (C. p. 82.33-34).

Prayer then became an offering, in the same manner as the Christian and Judaist conceives of worship as a sacrifice.

One may conclude that the Samaritan idea of prayer was an entirely and highly spiritual one, but something of the older notions

¹ According to the principle found in James 5.16.

² Long since discontinued, of course, because there had been no temple on Mount Gerizim, and therefore no altar for sacrifice since the late second century BC at latest.

about prayer through the merits of others still lingers on under the influences primarily of Latin Christianity. Indeed, the lesser concept of prayer that found traces in Markah's prayers began to become more prominent as time went on, as the Golden Age gave place before the Silver, and in the modern prayers that type has almost ousted the more spiritually and historically based. Markah, speaking of the destruction of the sanctuary on Mount Gerizim (possibly wrought by John Hyrcanus in 129 BC) bemoans the fact that true, traditional worship is no longer possible at his time. In the Memar (IV.5) he offers the following prayer, which is a mixture of greater and lesser concepts; he refers to the sanctuary:

O Merciful One, remember our fathers and do not let it be left without inhabitants. This is what the foes have wrought, seeking to make an end of it. If relief from them is near, set our heart upon faith in thee. Lead us in obedience to thee, for thou hast testified of thyself that thou dost not forget the covenant with the good (Deut. 4.31).

Prayer is always difficult because of other factors that enter into the mind, and in most religions this difficulty is recognized. The demands made for the constitution of ideal prayer are too great for mortal man, and the Samaritan is no exception. At his best he can be a man of great spiritual quality, but he is a member, he believes, of an elect community who are carrying on the spiritual traditions of their ancestors. His prayer that their prayers (especially the petition of Moses) may be efficacious for him is but a gesture of recognition that his own prayers cannot match theirs in spiritual content and purpose. His dependence on their prayers reduces his own spiritual efforts and that is the unfortunate consequence of appealing to the merit of others. There did develop a doctrine of merit, with which we shall briefly occupy ourselves in Chapter XIV.

Perhaps in the end, in very human terms, what matters is that a man has one to turn to in his distress, and this is expressed by Markah, who is ever conscious of the human weakness and need.

He who does not know a Lord, wherever is he to turn his face? He has no one to turn to in his affliction, and he has no one to remove from him his misfortune (Memar IV.5).

XIII

THE MEANS OF GRACE (A)

*I seek to drink now a little water from wisdom's fount, a well
whose waters bubble up from the depth of righteousness. All who
drink there are filled with living water.*¹

UP TO THIS point in our study we have noted various factors that have application in the elevation of men to higher spiritual status. Most of these factors are set out in the early Samaritan teaching in philosophical terms rather than in religious. Thus a man can make spiritual progress because of the manifestation of the higher light in his heart and mind. In later times the early notion that a man could commune with God through Moses developed, a notion mainly couched in mystical terms and expressive of the essential belief that inspiration through the medium of Moses could lead men away from potential evil to positive good and spiritual peace.

In the study of the means of grace we deal rather with national and corporate considerations and we leave the individual for the present. In view of the large number of these means of grace we shall have to place them in categories. Since some of them are familiar to students of the Old Testament, we shall not attempt to repeat all that has been written by others, but confine ourselves, as we have done throughout, to the purely Samaritan conception of them. We must begin with some general remarks about the nature of God's election of Israel, before examining those means of grace that arise out of that election; the subject of election as seen through Samaritan eyes is little different in essence from the same subject seen through Judaist eyes.

I • ELECTION

Remembering that the Samaritan doctrine of election is derived wholly from the Pentateuch and not from the Old Testament as a

¹ C. p. 819.13-15 (cf. John 4.10). The means of grace are regarded by some writers as wells of living water (water of life).

whole, we shall not be surprised to find that the election of Israel is founded in patriarchal times. The Samaritans have their lists of those patriarchal figures who were 'chosen' by God, but they differ, in the reason for the choice, from the interpreters of Judaism in that God chose these men because of the way they lived, or, as the philosopher puts it, because of the degree of manifestation of the divine light in their experience on earth. These lists usually include Enoch, Enosh, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Eleazar, Ithamar, Phinehas, Joshua and the seventy elders, although the list varies from writer to writer considerably, but in all the lists the three Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are present. These are 'the righteous three' with whom the covenant of election was contracted.

It is necessary to an understanding of the Samaritan attitude in this matter to realize that according to their interpretation of history those who had lived the good life belonged to a chain of pure ones, through whom and in whom the divine light shone. Moses was the seal of the righteous in the sense that the light manifested at its highest in the human sphere in his person; after him his light continued to radiate in Joshua and those who succeeded him as leaders of Israel. It is customary in writing on this subject to connect the idea of election directly with the patriarchal covenants (or simply the covenant), but this would not be a fair representation of the Samaritans' understanding of why Israel was chosen. To them the covenant was a *sign* of election, not a cause or occasion. The process involved in the election of Israel they conceived to have begun with the first Adam, that is, man before the fall from whom the light was transmitted through righteous men until Abraham, the progenitor of Israel. Thus the *realization* of election in the history of a people begins from Abraham properly, because Abraham was a 'new root'. Figures like Abel and Noah belonged to the history of election, but these men could not be regarded as elect Israelites, for Israel as a distinctive unit was born only with Abraham. Abraham had proved worthy of the light by responding to it in the right way; as 'father of a multitude of nations'¹ any one of his descended peoples might have been the elect nation, but for one thing. No people but those descended from Abraham through Isaac had begotten a Jacob or a Joseph. It was the people which came to be known as Israel, rather than that which became known as Ishmael or Edom, that best fitted

¹ Gen. 17.4.

the divine scheme for men's salvation. Through Isaac and Jacob and their successors God's light shone throughout a continuous chain of generations. The advent of Moses in the world involved teaching the elect their unique responsibility in the world. He taught them the covenant in the fullest sense and application of it. Before him they had known of the blessings promised to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, without appreciating the real reasons for such blessings. After Moses, they knew their elect status.

Some indication that freewill enters into the question of election is found in the belief that some men are predestined to greatness, but sometimes they exercise their right of individual will in the wrong way and thus make void their potential greatness. Abdallah gives the example of Pharaoh; he describes how Pharaoh developed might and power, both in word and deed, but in the wrong way, so that 'his latter end was destruction'. Something of the same teaching is to be found in the thought of the Old Testament prophets, that nations could be 'used' by God for the carrying out of his purposes, but that they could incur his wrath by going too far and misusing their special opportunities thus presented. The people of Israel, too, were predestined and indeed they almost lost their unique status when they made the golden calf. If it had not been for Moses and his offer of himself on their behalf, Israel would have been made an end of. That Israel continued to be the elect of God was in large measure due to Moses.

God always had a plan for Israel, but that plan found its origins in the very first dawn of history before sin entered the mind of the human species. It is in this context that we can better understand the remarks the Samaritan writers make about Israel's status. Some writers actually suggest that the moment of actual and final election came in the lifetime of Moses, and that before his time Israel was being made ready for election. It was with the realization in the mind of the elders and priests, thanks to Moses' teaching, that they had been specially chosen that the people became finally aware of their status. Abdallah writes:

He has chosen you out of all nations, elected you through the prophet (Moses) (C. p. 464.23).

Yet if all Israel, thus informed, had turned away from God by wilful acts of disobedience, Israel would not have remained the elect of God! Their election was ever subject to their response to God's

will being in accordance with the light revealed to them. The people so chosen were not, however, left to bear an intolerable burden. Once elect they were made subject to the care and instruction of God. Markah speaks of the inheritance of the elect thus:

Thanks be to the great King who has made us worthy of all honour and made us fit subjects to inherit what belonged to our fathers, and established for us what he promised them (Memar VI.4).

Subject to the expression in fitting manner of their status in the world, Israel were in time taught that they were the only elect people among the nations.

My people Israel, the Samaritans whom he chose and elected from among all the peoples which are upon the face of the earth (C. p. 745.20-21).

This statement from the Tabernacles Liturgy, so typical of the joyous belief of the Samaritans, was also an expression of the deep sense of awe experienced by them when they pondered their special place in the world. This awe was expressed because God had chosen Israel to be *his very own* (Memar IV.6), not just a tool which he intended to use in the pursuance of his plans for humanity. Proof of this is found in many passages in the literature. Markah inculcated a sense of awe and wonderment in his teaching, based on history, that God had actually changed the course of history and nature to aid his chosen. Commenting on Deut. 32.7, he writes a song of acknowledgement:

Ask your father and he will show you, and your heart will rejoice at what God has done for you.

How he has perfected you with glory!

How he has supplied you out of his good!

How he fed you bread from heaven!

How he has given you rest on the Sabbath!

How he has given you his own handwriting!

How he protected you with the cloud!

How he divided the sea and made you go through it!

How he turned the curse into blessing for you! (Memar IV.8).

Honour, glory, majesty—many such terms are associated with the elect status of Israel—represent the major theme in many songs of thanksgiving and acknowledgement in the various services of worship and in many poems. But it is never forgotten that such honour and majesty bring also a great responsibility. God had not chosen Israel because of some merit in them, though the merit deriving from the good life of their leaders helped in the confirmation of

election and the continuing efficacy of the covenant. Abdallah teaches that the selection of Israel is not a selection of privilege, but of responsibility. It is to be understood only as part of a divine plan, of a cosmic scheme of things. Israel may enjoy the status they had thus acquired, but it was God's act of selection, not man's. God's plan involved the whole of humanity! Israel's part in that plan was to act as guide and exemplar for other nations which had not yet evolved to the point when they were capable of receiving such revelation as Israel had received through Moses. The final acceptance by the nations of Israel's elect status, it was believed and is yet believed, would come in the time of the Taheb. The believing peoples would be saved and would not be faced with a judgement which took no account of their ignorance, of the fact that they had not like Israel been sent a prophet who was the very Man of God. Moses was not the prophet only of Israel; he was the prophet of the world—through Israel. His prophetic mission and the salvation attending it were cosmically understood.

Thus Markah taught that not all nations were elect and therefore could not be subjected to the same judgement on the last day, when men's spiritual status would be finally assessed.

Not all peoples will be questioned . . . for they have not been called *holy people*, nor *firstborn*, nor *heritage*, nor *priests* (etc.); nor have they heard the voice of the living God (Memar IV.11).

These attributes are, of course, extracted from Pentateuchal passages, and we can see in studying the literature that the Samaritans gave much thought to and study of the sources for the teaching of their elect status. A typical expression, derived from the study of the Pentateuch, is that of Markah's account of Moses' final address to the congregation of Israel.

O people whom the Lord has magnified, whose birth he made pure, whom he specially selected from righteous fathers, to whom he swore by his power and by his own great might, he delivered you with mighty power and bore you on eagle's wings; he gave you provision from heaven and satisfied your need. He attributed to you ten great names—*kings, a holy people, specially selected, firstborn son, priests, his heritage, myriad* (Memar III.10).

(The mention of 'ten' refers to the number of Hebrew words involved.)

As has been said, God did not leave his elect to fend for themselves, and the last quotations indicate how the Samaritans realized

the care of God throughout their history. But there is still another side to the picture of election. Many writers limit their praises and acknowledgements to the idea of election for more restricted reasons—not that these passages exclude from the inferential view the wider meaning of the election as a mission within the whole world. Such limited expressions are those which refer election and the elect status to the performance and observance of Sabbath and festival laws, and so on. The first part of the following quotation from the Durran could well be misunderstood if viewed in isolation, but taken with the second part a clearer picture is presented of all that is involved.

God made the bright luminaries to radiate; they are never darkened. He set apart the sacred festivals, bound their names to the luminaries¹ and gave them to the children of those who love him, that they might rejoice in them and give thanks and glorify his name and bring offerings to him.

He accepts (praise) from them and opens for them the heavenly treasure, and pours forth blessings from there, and convinces *all the nations of the world* that we² are the children of those who perform all the decrees of their Lord and maintain his festivals in peace (C. p. 46.22–27).

It might seem as though God's choice of Israel was represented solely by Israel's observance of festivals and decrees, as if Israel were 'sole beneficiaries' of God's will! Nothing could be farther from the truth. A typical expression of the same essential thought comes from the Tabernacles Liturgy:

God chose Israel and made them exalted above all the nations of the world. He called them sons and sent to them Moses, the elect of the faithful, and appointed for them Sabbaths and festivals, whose holiness is considerable (C. p. 432.10–12).

This passage puts the calling of Israel 'sons' before the giving to them of special prerogatives of worship. Markah lists the seven best things chosen throughout history by God in a unique passage (Memar II.10). These are: the light, the Sabbath, Mount Gerizim, Adam, the two stone tablets, the great prophet Moses, Israel. The interrelationship of these seven 'best things' is a complicated subject and we can do no more than study each within the widest possible context, allowing Markah the privilege of compilation and arrangement, of which the Samaritans like the Judaists were fond.

¹ I.e. calendar-wise. The exact conjunction of sun and moon must be known if the festivals are to take place at the correct time.

² Cf. Cowley's footnote 15, p. 46.

We have discussed the light, Adam, Moses, and now we think of Israel. The remaining three 'best things' of Markah's list come within the field of means of grace, and these will be considered in their turn with others not present in that list.

The chief elements in the Samaritan belief about the election of Israel have been briefly noted, the basic one being that the purpose of the election is to express God's will for the benefit of the world. Thus Israel could be a 'light to the Gentiles' as in the thought of Isa. 42.6, but to 'Gentiles' the Samaritans have to add 'the Judaists'!

It is to be stressed that Samaritanism has no teaching about a purified remnant as Judaism has. Judaism, after the prophets of the Old Testament, maintains a belief in the final salvation of Israel in a corporate sense, whereas Samaritanism finds no place for such a belief, there being no biblical warrant¹ (from the point of view of Samaritan exegesis). Samaritan theology developed along different lines, finding that the Day of Judgement would be a day of judgement on the individual, not on the nation.

We must now consider the various distinguishing marks of the election of Israel which enable Israel to be a fitting vehicle of divine grace. The means of grace, with which chosen Israel were fortified in their great task of responsibility, may be listed as follows:

The Law, circumcision, covenant, Sabbath, revelation, priesthood, the pure chain, merit of the righteous, and Mount Gerizim.

These we must divide into (a) those directly derived from the Law, (b) those which exist side by side with the Law, and (c) those which are 'man-made'; (d) Mount Gerizim deserves closer study in its own right.

By the aid of these means of grace, Israel were enabled, especially in times of spiritual depression and apathy, to rise above their lower selves to that higher status that befitted those chosen of God.

2 · THE LAW

All the hosts of Israel trembled when he pronounced the Ten Words, as they issued from the divine mouth,² (bringing) life to the generations for ever.³

The supreme means of grace is the Law, the five books of Moses. From it derive other means of grace, but in itself it is the most

¹ Despite Deut. 14.1.

² The Logos belief is often omitted from such passages, or added elsewhere in the poem.

³ C. p. 50.16-17.

direct and the most effective of the means available to the man who would approach God. The reasons for this we shall point out as we proceed. It will be observed that the Samaritans have allowed themselves liberal use of hyperbole in connection with the Law. In their descriptions of it they tend toward excess, and indeed no description is adequate in the eyes of the Samaritan writer. So it would appear most of all in the Defter, which provides our greatest source of teaching on the subject. Markah does not say overmuch in his Memar, but in his Defter hymns he has set out, along with other Defter writers and notably Amram Darah, the Samaritan attitude towards the Law, covering most aspects of the subject very fully. In this subject we do not find many mediaeval additions or expansions to the theme developed in early times.

Before proceeding to examine the various aspects of the teaching about the Law, it is well to remember that the Samaritans had only the five books of Moses or Pentateuch,¹ and they did not, like the Judaists, develop a corpus of oral law that was to take a place close second only to the Bible. The Samaritans, who prided themselves in their title 'Keepers of the Law' or 'Keepers of the Truth', were like the Sadducees restricted to the Pentateuch, but unlike them they did not allow themselves to develop their doctrine along narrow lines. While the Sadducees, for example, could not develop a doctrine of a general resurrection (and some early Christian writers believed the Samaritans did not either), the Samaritans, in fact, found biblical warrant for all sorts of religious beliefs not explicitly stated in their Bible. We have seen over and over again, on quoted evidence, how they could develop new lines of thought wherever there was some biblical warrant for even the germ of the idea. This procedure was aided, perhaps motivated, by Christian teaching. Thus we begin to see how the Samaritans regarded their Law. It was at once a sealed record of revelation—unlike, they thought, the Judaist Bible which was added to in an heretical manner—and a gateway to new life. It was sacrosanct and yet a liberating source. It was the final revelation, yet led to perpetual inspiration. It was a fount of living waters from which the believer could satisfy every thirst.

The care with which the Samaritan scribes copied their precious Law is matched only by that of the Judaist scribes, or by the best scribes of the ancient Qumran community. Every word, every letter,

¹ Though they had a text of the historical books, Joshua to II Kings, closely approximating to the Masoretic Text.

every detail was counted with scrupulous care. Yet the Samaritan Pentateuch is not identical with that of Judaism and Christianity. There are many scores, even hundreds, of differences, chiefly of a minor nature, but there are differences of serious import, too. One of these is the additional Tenth Commandment in the Samaritan Decalogue. The Decalogue, usually called 'the Ten Words', appears in our Bible in Ex. 20 and Deut. 5. In our Old Testament, which is the whole Bible of Judaism, these two versions differ somewhat; in the Samaritan Pentateuch harmonization has taken place between the two. What the Samaritans call the Tenth Commandment or Tenth Word¹ is actually an addition to the Masoretic Text. The addition is vital to Samaritan religious belief and to the whole Samaritan position as claimants to the title of True Israel. It sets out the claim that Mount Gerizim is the true and only place for the worship of God and hence the true dwelling-place of the divine presence. This claim is not, of course, a new one, for there is evidence in the Book of Deuteronomy that Mount Gerizim and not Mount Zion was the revealed place for the worship of God.²

The famous Abisha Scroll possessed by the Samaritans they believe to be the autograph of the biblical personage Abisha himself, but it is almost certain that the copy is only half a millennium old (except for some older portions which may date back a whole millennium). The colophon of the manuscript states that Abisha son of Phinehas son of Eleazar wrote it on Mount Gerizim in the thirteenth year after Joshua and the Israelites crossed the Jordan into Canaan.

We now proceed to examine Samaritan teaching about the Law, its origin, nature, purpose, efficacy, etc. Much is written about the *ultimate* origin of the Law. The prevalent view is that it was a corpus built up upon the original Ten Words or Decalogue, and these words were connected with the divine Word or Logos. Since Moses was the Logos and also the Lawgiver, the receiver on earth of the Law, it was natural for later Samaritan exegetes to think in terms of Moses almost exclusively, while their forebears had expressed a more theocentric outlook on the matter.

The Scripture was established right from creation.³ It was made in the

¹ It is largely composed of Deut. 27.2-8 and 11.30.

² For this subject and a discussion on various other differences in the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch, see M. Gaster, *The Samaritans*, pp. 185f.

³ Cf. the Judaist tradition, Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 88b-89a, that Moses ascended into heaven to receive a Law that had existed for 974 generations before creation! R. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology*, pp. 34f.

light; it was made known from the mouth of its composer. A prophet received it, who was worthy of such glory from his very birth (Memar VI.2).

From the Defter comes further detail of the belief. We read there that the Law

Issued from the fiery heap, which was a storehouse full of blessings (C. p. 49.15).

Of course, everything could be said to have derived from the *primaeval* 'heap' of energy (fire) from which matter evolved, but the Samaritan writer here (possibly Markah) is obviously connecting the pre-creation, pre-matter energy or fire with the fire of Mount Sinai, the scene of the actual conveyance of the Law. Speaking of the two tablets of stone in the eighth hymn of his Defter collection, Markah writes:

Long were they concealed in the heart of the fire (C. p. 23.25).

A vaguer expression (for there is no consistency in the imagery in the Defter and other early parts of the Liturgy) occurs in the Sabbath order (C. p. 49), where we read that the Law 'drew its fullness from the *depth* of the universe', the two Hebrew words for 'depth' being those of Gen. 1.2 (*tohu wa-bohu*). Whatever the choice of words, all Samaritan writers who touch on this subject seem confident that the Law originated in the pre-creation, unmaterialized energy or fire.

There is another set of passages from various parts of the Liturgy which do not actually specify the *locus* or 'state' of origin, but are content to speak of the invisible world at large, a notion that is found in abundance in the literary imagery of the descriptions of the Sinai theophany.

From the hidden regions of the upper habitation came forth the Ten Words of the covenant (Markah, C. p. 61.20).

Little direct association in any studied way is made between the Logos and the Ten Words, except in certain mystical passages in the mediaeval didactic writings. There we learn that God's Word issued forth the Ten Words, which were to be the foundations of the Law. Moses, that is, was to receive the Decalogue inscribed on two tablets of stone and thereafter expound them on the basis of the secret teaching he received from God atop Mount Sinai, when he was with God in the invisible world, the top of Mount Sinai being the mystical *locus* between the two worlds. Once he had expounded the Decalogue

in proclamation and in writing, the Law was in existence and fixed for all time.

The kernel of the Law thus derived from the unseen realm is of the treasury of God, and like God himself it is infinite. Thus we read:

All the water-drawers have drawn from its store of knowledge, but they have not reached the end (bottom) of it, for it is bound up with the *primaeval store (tohu wa-bohu)* (C. p. 49.21).

And so it is

A store that is undiminishing . . . for its foundation is in everlasting life (C. p. 49.22).

The descriptions of the actual transmission of the Ten Words are manifold, and we are obliged to excerpt from an abundance of sources those that best exemplify the teaching.

Lightnings illumined the Scripture as it issued from the unseen to the seen. Dewdrops of mercy were scattered abroad so that no storm took place when the Scripture descended, bringing life to the generations for all time (C. p. 51.25-26).

Thus we read in Markah's Defter hymns of the two tablets blazing with light (fire?), for they were 'written by the finger of consuming fire', a favourite expression often used to avoid the anthropomorphic expression 'written with the finger of God' in Ex. 31.18, usually regarded as an E document phrase. Yet several Samaritan writers deign to keep the biblical (E) expression. No doubt they would not have done so if they could have known that we of the twentieth century would be scrutinizing their writings so closely! In any case, they knew well enough that no one of their community would have taken umbrage at their frequent repetition of the anthropomorphic biblical expression, for the traditional interpretation was not along literal lines. Every Samaritan knew that by the 'finger' of God was meant his 'fiery power'.¹

Markah says much more in his Defter hymns than in his Memar about the actual receiving of the Law by Moses, but in one excellent passage in Book VI.2 he writes:

See Moses enter into the fire to receive from the right hand of God the tablets containing the covenant, the autograph of the True One. When God willed and gave his autograph to the great prophet Moses in the two tablets of the covenant, after he made Israel to hear his voice above Mount Sinai, he wrote them on both sides of the tablets, the one and then the other.

¹ Hardly in the sense of Acts 2.3f.

Another way of expressing the actual receipt of the Ten Words is found (again typically) in the Defter:

Into the midst of heaven, where there was an opening, Moses stretched forth his hand and received it from the hand of the bearer of the world (C. p. 49.23).

Whatever imagery is used, Moses always *received* the Law and there is considerable emphasis on the divine act of giving. The Law is primarily a gift of God, a means of grace for the elect.

In one typical Defter hymn (C. p. 50) we read that God made angels, powers and foundations, to quake when the Law was received. The 'break-through' from the unmanifest to the manifest is often described in association with universal eruptions, as we shall have occasion to observe in the next part of the book. Another passage in the same hymns, attributed to Markah, speaks of the people below, six hundred thousand Israelites, watching as the angels and powers descended, while the mountain shook and Moses was out of sight, enveloped in the cloud on the top of the mountain.

The cloud symbolism, resembling that of the New Testament in some respects, involved the belief that the cloud concealed the unseen from the seen, the invisible world of God from the visible world of men. There was a breach in the uppermost reaches of the cloud which led into (or was) the gateway of heaven itself, and it was at this point that Moses stood as he reached out to take the Scripture. How the Samaritans managed to connect this *locus* with Mount Gerizim we shall note when we study the latter. That the Law itself was held to be a 'gateway' to heaven is another matter, which we shall consider below when dealing with the attributes of Scripture.

It is noteworthy that according to most Judaist traditions relevant to the subject it was angels who actually did the writing of the Ten Words and not God himself. These traditions no doubt reflect the age-old desire to avoid anthropomorphic expressions. The whole point about the Samaritan view of the Law-giving is that it was an act that took place between God and Moses. After all, Moses was the Word and he was God's Man in the lower world. With such a point of view the Samaritans could not for a moment entertain the idea that angels could intervene between God and his apostle. This truth we have observed in other connections and it is fundamental to Samaritan thinking about God and his salvation of men.

Having received the first copy of the Decalogue, 'written' by the

primaeval fire of God, Moses then had the task of expounding and thereby expanding the original Ten Words into the whole corpus of the Law. This he did with greatest possible care. According to Markah's teaching or tradition, Moses then requested of God the Words of Mercy (Ex. 34.6f.); thus, apparently, there was a Samaritan tradition that the first material to be written by Moses after the original Ten Words was the passage just referred to. The process, we are told, was that thereafter Moses went on adding to and expanding his material until the whole Law as we now have it was completed. His prophetic function made it possible for him to write of things he would not do, places he would not see, and even of his own death.

The Law thus finalized was the final revelation of God direct from God to man; thereafter revelation was to be through the mind. God had made his final personal appearance to the world. His voice was heard at Sinai; his will was on record for all time.

The purpose of the Law is the maintaining of the elect of God on his way. Many pitfalls lay ahead, many temptations to be encountered, many snares of impurity, many physical perils. Israel's protection from all these was ensured by their possession of the record of God's will for them. Armed with the Law, equipped with the divine directives (*tōrōt*), Israel had no excuse for hesitation or fear. The Law of God contained many blessing-bestowing institutions, the chief of them the covenant, circumcision, the Sabbath and Festivals. All was prepared that Israel's life might be pure and holy, that Israel might shine among the nations and lead them to the praise and glory of God.

The Samaritans have very definite ideas about the nature of the laws and statutes contained in the Law, having diligently studied them in their application to life through the centuries. We gain a clear impression of the attitude in the Malef, where in Question and Answer 150 we learn that the Law primarily contains the record of

The creation of the world, the words of the Patriarchs, the sections of the meritorious ones well defined, secrets and mysteries, knowledge of posterity, the signs that God did in the early days of Israel's history; commandments and statutes, teaching concerning what was and what is yet to be, evidence of the Day of Vengeance and Recompense.

Question 151 is 'How many commandments and statutes are there in the Law?' The answer is 'Six hundred and thirteen'—a figure with which the Judaist Rabbinic authorities agree. Where there is disagreement is in the categorizing of these. According to the Malef

and Samaritan teaching generally, the total consists of two hundred and forty-eight commands that are to be obeyed and performed, and three hundred and five which represent prohibitions. There are sixty which are completely obligatory on every man of Israel for all time. These are classified as follows in the Malef, a classification which is useful as a guide to the Samaritan code of religious life.

- 1 The faith concerning God (Ex. 3.6; Deut. 4.35).
- 2 The faith concerning the oneness of God (Deut. 6.4).
- 3 The fear of the Lord (Deut. 6.13).
- 4 The service of the Lord (*ibid.*).
- 5 Cleaving to him (Deut. 10.20).
- 6 Walking in God's ways (Deut. 28.9).
- 7 Hearing/obeying God's voice (Deut. 4.30).
- 8 Loving God (Deut. 6.5; 11.1).
- 9 Keeping the Law (Deut. 6.6).
- 10 The obligatory commandment about teaching the Law to one's children (Deut. 6.7).
- 11 Reading of the Law continually (*ibid.*).
- 12 Binding of the Law upon the hands (Deut. 6.8).¹
- 13 The Law to be bands between the eyes (*ibid.*).
- 14 The teaching of Moses and faith in it (Deut. 18.15).
- 15 Commandments about the prayers (Ex. 29.43).
- 16 The command about marriage (Gen. 1.28).

The remaining laws in this group deal with the commandments about circumcision, eating of unleavened bread for seven days, commemoration of Passover, keeping of the Sabbath, honouring of parents, keeping far from wickedness, uncleanness and laws of clean and unclean, washing for purity, loving one's neighbour, honouring of the aged, just measure, honouring of the Levites, not eating blood, sacrifice, various pilgrimages, accurate computation of the calendar, the Day of Atonement, Tabernacles Pilgrimage, thanksgiving, tithe, gifts, worship on Mount Gerizim, no false dealing.

These are the sixty in the order in which they appear in the Malef. The ritual and ceremonial laws are carried out scrupulously. As for the inculcation of ethical principles, we shall see in Chapter XV how the Samaritans, without having a second law like that of the Judaists, advanced and developed the Pentateuchal injunctions, so that the essence of these was applied to new personal and social situations.

All these, plus the prohibitions and other non-obligatory positive commands, constitute Israel's protection against divine disfavour.

¹ According to the Samaritan text.

When the Ten Words were sent down on two tablets, it was to open and to close, to open up the truth and to close the gate of evil, and make an end of enmity to God (Memar IV.1).

The reading is not efficacious, the prayer not acceptable, unless it comes from a heart full of repentance. If we read and do not practise what we read, what is the point of such reading? (Memar VI.8.)

On the other hand, full observance of the Law's commandments brings many a blessing. When we have examined some of the chief attributes of the Law in common parlance in the literature, we shall take note of the benefits provided by the Law.

The two most common attributes are closely connected with two of the fundamentals of its origin. One of these is perfection. As has been pointed out before, perfection to the Samaritans does not mean full growth (witness their understanding of the verb in Gen. 2.2), i.e. something that is ultimately attained, but rather absolute perfection *in nature*, i.e. *sui generis* perfect, even if it is unrealized perfection. According to the Samaritan idea of perfection, the origin of that which is perfect has its *form* or pattern in the real (invisible) world. Such a thing exists and has always existed only in perfection, and is derived directly from God. There cannot be a stage less than perfection. This belief seems, according to the commentaries, to have come in the first instance from Deut. 32.4, where God's work in creation is called perfect. Thus the Law, derived from pre-creation in the real world, could not contain error or suffer alteration. It was the cardinal sin of the Judaists, especially Ezra, say the Samaritans, that they altered the wording of the Law for polemical purposes.

Every generation will testify that the Law contains no heresies, but only that which is written by God and Moses (Markah, C. p. 877.18-19).

It is more than likely that Samaritan interest in the nature of the Law was heightened by the fact of the Judaist Bible being an expansion of the Law, and possibly by the principle of oral law developed by the Judaists and, in somewhat similar manner, by the Muslims much later in time. The Samaritans did not develop any *sacrosanct* oral law; they confined their source of authority solely to the Pentateuch, the one perfect Law of God.

The next quotation introduces the second ultimate and links it with the first:

The sacred Scripture, knowledge of perfect truth, teacher that teaches life from the light in the unseen (C. p. 50.8-9).

The Law is often called simply 'the truth', and we are at once reminded of the same practice amongst other religious groups. The Mandaeans used the term *qushta* (truth) for the ultimate knowledge by mystical revelation. In the Dead Sea Sect of Qumran the term 'sons of truth' seems to mean 'sons of the Law'.¹ The Samaritans use the same Aramaic word *qushta* of the Law and could easily describe themselves as 'sons of the Law', though they preferred the description 'keepers of the Law'.

We have noted how the Law, it was held, came from the unseen world of God to Moses. The Samaritans are extremely careful to state that God himself handed the Law direct to Moses, and never say that the Law is some sort of emanation from him, which has no relationship with his own person. Such a belief in an emanated Law did prevail in Palestine in the Roman era, especially in the Valentinian Gnosticism, which claimed that aeons emanated from God. One of these, Truth, emanated from God to the world. Markah once or twice speaks in Gnostic-style language of 'Yahweh (YHWH) the King of the heaven of heavens'; this could be a counter to the prevalent Valentinian concept that Yahweh (the Demiourgos) ruled in the lower heaven, while the supreme deity dwelt in the supreme heaven or heaven of heavens. The Samaritans could afford to use Gnostic-style terms without the danger of syncretism arising, because they could find biblical warrant for the germ of every idea that became accepted in their community. They associated the source of the Law not only with the invisible world and the *primaeval* fire in general, but with the ideal Garden of Eden in particular.

Sacred is its fruit; it is from the tree of truth (C. p. 49.30).

So the Law is

An open garden that is not closed to him who would enter therein (C. p. 52.21-22).

The Garden of Eden imagery is always pleasant and subtle, but underlying it is the notion of origins. As the Law is associated with the ideal garden, so it is the gateway to the ideal. As Markah puts it (C. p. 49), 'The Scripture is a radiant gateway', a gateway opened up by God on top of Mount Sinai, that all men might be enabled to enter in and possess eternal life. As the Malef puts it (47):

¹ E.g. see T. H. Gaster, *The Scriptures of the Dead Sea Sect*, p. 238. Cf. also Heb. 10.26.

The Law is the tree of life, and all who eat of its fruit are inhabitants of the Garden, having eternal life there.¹

Much is written of the life-giving quality of the Law, but it is to be noted that such descriptions are no mere piece of fanciful imagery. There is always the deeper note, a mystical one, that true contemplation of the Law, not mere reading of it or even observance of its commandments only, gives him who contemplates a new *quality* of life. We shall shortly observe a parallel approach in connection with its light-bestowing power. Speaking of the two tablets of the Law, Markah writes in the Defter:

Bright were they like lightning flashing . . . an Eden life-bringing to those who drink therefrom, an Eden whose source is of eternal life, a fruitful tree out of the unseen world . . . a tree bringing wisdom for every generation (C. p. 23.24, 26-27).

In other, though similar, terms we read that

The great Scripture is life of eternal life dwelling among us (C. p. 50.28),

which is one example at least of the Palestinian (Judaist and Samaritan) outlook referred to in John 5.39.

And

Happy are we that God set among us the source of life, for it comes from the great deep (C. p. 50.30).²

In our study of man, something of the inspiration his mind can derive from the mystical contemplation of the Law was mentioned. Markah describes the influence of the Law on a man:

He gave a perfect Law to his servants to provide life and length of days, for by the observing of it is the soul disposed, and according to the state of the soul is the body disposed (Memar II.1).

He speaks in beautiful language of the Law in the following passage from the same book:

The life of the world is in the deep waters of a pleasant water-spring. Let us stand with perception to drink of its waters. We are thirsty for the waters of life (cf. John 4.14, etc.).

The illumining quality of the Law is praised over and over again,

¹ For Judaist traditions of a similar nature, see, for example, Pirke Rabbi Eliezer, p. 85, Jerusalem Targum to Gen. 11.15; cf. also Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2.4, and the Slavonic Enoch 31.1.

² Cf. also C. p. 49.22.

and the persons illumined are the wise and ignorant alike. In this passage we see the ignorant being rescued from their darkness:

It gives light to those who have no light,¹ and sets them on the path of peace, guiding them to the way of truth (C. p. 49.24).

Again the question of origin is tied up with the attribute, for the Law 'is full of light from the light of everlasting life' (C. p. 51.24).

The mouth of life spoke the words of life to the generations; a word from the origin² of life was heard, but not seen (C. p. 55.2).

Man is often thought of as spiritually *sick*, no matter how much he tries to live the 'way of the True One', and it is a function of the Law to remedy his malaise.

The Scripture of the great prophet Moses heals by medicine prepared by the True One (Memar IV.8).

It is life's healer, it cleanses spirits, sanctifies souls, enlightens minds (Defer, C. p. 57.2-3).

There is a quality of 'fullness' about the Law, a Gnostic notion, too, and the Law is said to 'fill the world' in the soteriological sense (C. p. 51). This special quality manifests itself in life and light as we have seen; it manifests also, in philosophical terms, as wisdom (illumination), enabling men to follow the way to the truth. That way, the way of prayerful contemplation based on the Law, is a way of joy, like a garden full of life-giving fruit. This is the reward of those who, having studied and obeyed the Law, have received salvation.

It crowns its readers with lovingkindness, fills with joy those who obey it, gives wisdom to those who study it, life to those who observe it . . . Let us bless the Power who gave it (C. p. 57.8-9).

Attention may be drawn briefly to the possibility that the Law is to the Samaritan what the Holy Spirit is to the Christian. Belief in the Law is the third tenet of the Samaritan creed; belief in the Holy Spirit is the third tenet of the Christian creed. For the Samaritan the Law, like the Holy Spirit of Christianity, is the 'lord and giver of life which proceeds from God through his Man', with which may be compared the Christian 'Lord and giver of life who proceeds from the Father and from the Son'.

Three of the blessings of the Law most praised by the Samaritans, as by the Judaists, are circumcision, covenant and Sabbath. These

¹ Cf. the thought and language of Isa. 9.2.

² Literally 'heap' (of primaeval matter).

we shall now examine briefly as means of grace that are distinctive of God's plan of salvation for his elect, as seen through Samaritan eyes.

3 · CIRCUMCISION

*He who cuts the foreskin possesses the faith and is saved from his evils.*¹

If we were to compare the words of this title with the words that now follow—

The rite was regarded as a token in the flesh of the effect of Divine Grace in the heart, hence the phrases used in Deut. 30.6²

—we would properly assess the Samaritan attitude toward this ancient practice. Less by far is said about this means of grace than about any other, as if the Samaritans took it so much for granted that it was scarcely necessary to mention it. When they do, it is usually in works on law and religious practice, where the biblical injunction is set out along with details of the manner of exercising it. In liturgical and other religious contexts it is more usual to speak in the manner of Jeremiah and other prophets of the circumcision of the heart.

Apart from the metaphorical usage in spiritual terms, the Samaritans expressed their view of the rite as a distinguishing mark. Circumcision of the flesh is a *sign* of belonging to the elect. The circumcision of the Judaists and the Arabs, precisely the same in origin and practice, was regarded by them as worthless, and indeed they could speak of all peoples other than themselves as 'the uncircumcised', including Judaists! It is not certain why the Samaritans chose to attack the Judaists in this connection, but presumably it was because they thought the Judaists had no right to circumcision. They themselves were the true Israel and therefore alone eligible for the distinguishing mark in the body that connoted exclusive belonging to God. They would have accepted, if God's ownership were substituted for Christ's, the Pauline statement:

I bear the marks of Jesus branded on my body (Gal. 6.17).

That is, in principle, how the Samaritans regarded physical circumcision. They were 'branded' in the service of God.

They appear to stress P's tradition that circumcision was revealed

¹ Memar Markah III.3.

² *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, Article on 'Circumcision', Vol. I., p. 443.

to Abraham (Gen. 17.1-14).¹ J's ascription (Ex. 4.25f.) of it to Moses and E's to Joshua (Josh. 5.5f.) were not given any prominence. It is to be noted that P is considered by many scholars to be a northern document. No doubt E's interest in Joshua, continued in a special way in Samaritanism and not in Judaism to the same extent, was concerned with the origin of what we may call the First Kingdom, while P, a document resulting from long analysis of history, takes what became the Samaritan view of history. Hence Abraham is the progenitor of the Hebrew tribes and therefore the first to receive the divine command about circumcision. In a sense, the Samaritan Israelites may claim to bear the marks of Abraham, the root of the elect and the first to receive God's promise.

Circumcision was a sacrificial act of purification and hence only those who were circumcised and performed all the other commandments of the Law could be pure. The Judaists, in the Samaritan view, did not come into this category and were therefore not pure. The idea of circumcision as a sacrificial act seems to link directly with the ancient and possibly the original meaning of the act. In very ancient times such marking of the body was an act that bound a man to his tribal deity, and thus all who were marked in the same way belonged to the same deity. The Samaritans say very little of this and much prefer to speak of their common bond in terms of keeping of the law and the covenant; yet they do teach in their legal writings that a man can only be a true Israelite if he is circumcised in the manner prescribed.

Several biblical statements seem to tie the act of circumcision closely with the covenant between God and Israel (e.g. Gen. 17.12; Ex. 12.48), but these statements appear to come from a post-exilic period. Yet we have the story of Zipporah (Ex. 4.25) performing the rite in the belief that this would remove God's displeasure, seeing that circumcision had been neglected during the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt and the desert.

A distinguishing mark, an act of purification, then metaphorically a sacrifice within the heart—in that order the Samaritan sees in circumcision a means of grace. The truly contrite heart is a circumcised heart; the really sincere worshipper offers a heart that is purified.

Since I trust in thee, O King who art near, circumcise my heart and enable me to renew repentance (C. p. 75.7).

¹For this belief see the Samaritan interpretation of Israel's origins as described in the Introduction, pp. 15f.

4 · COVENANT

*O Eternal One whose covenants endure for ever, thy covenant with our fathers is a covenant that cannot be annulled.*¹

On the patriarchal covenants the Samaritans had a lot to say; the subject preoccupied them in a variety of ways, and still does. They realized that it was largely because of the covenant(s) with their forefathers that they were in an elect status. They feared lest the nation should do anything to bring that covenant to an end. The quotation above refers to God's side of the covenant. He could never break his promise to the forefathers, but Israel could make it ineffective and ineffacious by their refusal or inability to perform their part in the bargain of the covenant.

The covenant consists of a number of covenantal dealings between God and the Patriarchs, and the general term 'covenant' as used herein includes all these; in any case, the one reinforced the other(s) and each pertained to the other in type and quality. Markah sets out the various covenants (as below) and relates to them the various blessings given to the Patriarchs. Now in this sense we have something distinctive of the Samaritan viewpoint. In their ethical teaching it became traditional to speak of the good, righteous men as 'possessors of the blessing' and those who were responsible for evil-doing as 'possessors of the curse'. The latter were excluded from the covenant—not by any act of God, but by an act of the nation preserving its pure status before God, because they were not under the blessing, but under the curse. Markah's list is as follows:

- First group: *those given to the righteous of the world:* three to Abram (Abraham): Gen. 12.2; 12.3; 22.17.
three to Isaac: Gen. 25.11; 26.3f.; 26.12.
one to Jacob: Gen. 28.14.
- Second group: *those given by Moses:*
Ex. 32.29; 39.43; Deut. 1.11.
- Third group: *that given to Noah at Mount Gerizim:*
Gen. 9.1.

Markah prefixes his section on these blessings with the words:

Let us give thanks to the great King who has made us worthy of all honour and made us fit subjects to inherit what belonged to our fathers, and has established for us what he promised them (Memar III.4).

¹ Markah, Defter, C. p. 21.14.

This statement sets the pattern, for the covenant to the Samaritan is rarely considered to have been given by God because of the merit of Israel. It was an act of his own beneficence and as such had to be highly prized by Israel's generations, for there was nothing they could do to ensure the continuing validity of these promised blessings other than that which God had commanded in the relevant laws.

The covenant as blessing—that is one way of regarding it, but there is the historical series of contractual covenants which constitute the overall covenant as conceived in Judaism and by students of the Old Testament generally. It is in this latter sense that many liturgists write. As a liturgist writing in the *Defter Markah* expresses the traditional belief about the covenant and lists the patriarchal covenants as seven in number (C. p. 51). These are the covenants with:

- (1) Noah (the rainbow);
- (2) Abraham (circumcision);
- (3) Moses (Sabbath);
- (4) Israel (the tablets of the Law);
- (5) Israel (Passover);
- (6) Israel (covenant of salt);
- (7) the priesthood through Phinehas.

The Samaritans never forget the historical covenants that bespeak salvation for Israel, nor do they overlook the responsibilities undertaken by Israel in these, but the emphasis in spiritual terms is on the joyous belief in the promised *blessings* of God to those with whom he had covenanted. So much, in fact, did they remember the patriarchal covenants in the historical context that they devised a special *ḳataf* called the '*ḳataf* of the Covenant', which contains all the biblical material relevant to the covenants. This *ḳataf*, or complex of verses,¹ is used at all major diets of worship and serves as a reminder to the believers of their debt to God as an elect people. It is ever stressed that the covenant was made primarily with the 'righteous three' (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and much study went into the reasons why they were chosen. It was decided that it was because of their relative merits that God specially covenanted with them and bestowed on them rich blessings to be inherited, subject to continuing merit, by their descendants.

¹ Cowley did not include the texts of these *ḳatafs* in his publication of the Liturgy and they are available only in manuscripts. The *ḳataf* consists of a series of biblical verses or parts of verses which belong to a given theme, e.g. Sabbath, atonement.

Returning to the question of the efficacy of the covenant introduced in the title to this section, we find Markah teaching quite explicitly that its efficacy depends on Israel's undertaking to perform their promises to God. The promises made by God to the Patriarchs were matched by the undertakings promised by Israel. So the validity of the divine promises is matched by the continuing purity and obedience of Israel. Speaking of evil, Markah writes:

O congregation, keep your mind away from it and do not pass over to it. If you hate it your glory will be above what it is now . . . The glory of your fathers will then last for ever and what they covenanted for you will never be changed for you (Memar VI.9).

In prayers of petition it is common to depend on the covenant as a source for appeal.

Remember, O compassionate God, the covenant with our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Joseph and our lord Moses.

O greatest of judges, forgive our iniquities and remember for us the covenant with our ancestors (Liturgy, *passim*).

The introduction of Joseph in the list shows that there is more than the historical covenants in the mind of the petitioner. Indeed, many such 'covenantal' petitions go far beyond the bounds of the permissible, for some of those who are reckoned to have been covenanted with were not, in fact, covenanted with in any formal sense. Yet the term 'covenant' came to mean a relationship of blessedness between a man and God. Joseph and Moses did not have formal covenants in any patriarchal usage of the word, but they were recipients of God's favour, his blessing, and thus were fitting objects for petition. Thus Abdallah can write (*passim* in his didactic writings):

He will bring about his covenant. He will cause his disfavour to cease. He will give it a bill of divorce!

In conclusion, we may say that the covenant as a means of grace is a potent influence in the keeping of Israel dutiful. The historical covenants are the underlying background of the belief in *the covenant*, but it is the promises of rich blessing that catch the Samaritans' imagination. Living up to the demands of these is no easy task, but the way to do so is clearly set before them in the Law, and there are other means of grace as well available to them, to help them on the way to the True One.

5 · SABBATH¹

*The ten foundations of the Sabbath . . . covenant, holiness, blessing, rest, warning, observance of it, life, death, cessation from work, prayer.*²

Markah's list here, each item derived from the Law, may be considered muddled and disordered by western minds, but it was typical of the Samaritan (and Judaist) student of the Law to collect all material relevant to a particular subject, even although the material thus extracted was lacking in sequence. In some topics Markah brings order out of disarranged material, but he did not teach about the Sabbath in any special categories. In fact, it was not a topic for his specific study at all; he was content to make the necessary observations as occasion demanded. Indeed, few Samaritan writers outside of the Defter contributors made any attempt to systematize their material.

Despite all this, the Samaritans did develop a twofold attitude toward and belief in the Sabbath. The first is the straightforward biblical one that the Sabbath is a day of physical rest.³ On this aspect of the Sabbath day the Samaritans have nothing new or distinctive to say. The second, however, provides a fresh approach, and in this connection they do not speak of the Sabbath day, but of 'the Sabbath'. The Sabbath day is, of course, a day of rest and holiness, as directed in the Law. The Sabbath (as an ideal) is an experience, a state. Judaism has something of this notion, too, but less fully expounded. It is this distinctive idea that claims our attention in the study of this means of grace.

First of all, the Sabbath is founded right in creation. In one sense it is one of the foundation pillars of the cosmos, in another it is the first city of creation. Markah connects Sabbath with creation in this sort of way, without specifying what he means. Apparently his

¹ No special reference is needed to weekday and festival worship. Enough has already been said about the efficacy of prayers and praises in a general way. Usually the great festivals are described as being like Sabbaths; thus, much that is written below about Sabbath can be applied to the major festivals.

² Memar IV.1.

³ The *fundamental* Samaritan beliefs about Sabbath are those of E (Ex. 20.8-11), which places Sabbath in the creative process, not those of J (Ex. 34.21), which gives no real reason for Sabbath, nor of D (Deut. 5.12-15), which speaks of Sabbath as a commemoration of the Exodus, nor of P (Ex. 31.12-17), which makes it a sign between the Lord and Israel, nor of the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 23.12), which makes it a benefit for beasts, etc.

students and readers understood these things without receiving any explanation! From what can be gleaned about the early attitude toward the Sabbath, it was apparently thought of as the microcosm of ideal life's macrocosm. To explain what is meant, let us think of the week as comprising six days of work; before the next week commences there is a period of rest. The fact that it is the seventh day of the week has value only in so far as it pertains to the calendar and the organizing of the festivals; what really mattered was that Sabbath was an experience of material negation—absence of work and other human labours—which allowed the spiritual state of man to flower for a little.¹ We shall see the significance of this notion below when we think of Sabbath as being like a garden.

Sabbath is also itself a sort of creation, not physical but spiritual. All the means of grace are called creations, though not commonly enough for us to regard this appellation as typical, but it is commonplace to call Sabbath a creation and to speak of it as having a boundary of its own. It is a 'free city' outside of the foreign territory of weekdays. As a spiritual creation it is to be regarded as cosmic in its signification, for

The Sabbath is a sign which none of the world's generations shall remove, for it is a sign recognized by the world's nations, those on high and those on earth.²

Those on earth are 'the Hebrews at the boundaries of the world', i.e. the elect of God already at the top level of this world and potentially at the gate of the other. During the Sabbath experience the Hebrews are uplifted from the world, and experience something of the ideal state which will be the bliss of those assessed as righteous on the Day of Judgement. The Sabbath experience is closely bound up with the idea of the real world and the life in that world. Freedom within that world is one of its greatest attractions, but only one of them. The greatest of all is the worship of and approach to God in prayer and thanksgiving.

Yet at the level of 'seventh day', the rest day, it is, like circumcision, a mark for Israel and peculiar to the Israelite way of life.

The seventh day is like a beautiful city and no inhabitant can dwell therein unless he be of Abraham.³

¹ It could only do so in the most limited way during the working week.

² The text for this is the Nablus Sabbath MS. consulted by S. Brown in the preparation of his doctoral dissertation for the University of Leeds, 1955 (see Bibliography, p. 460). Brown, p. 298.

³ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

As a distinguishing mark, covenantally conceived, it is a gift of God to Israel, and at the physical level of life it is a means of grace. Like the Law, it was an act of God's will to give it to Israel (C. pp. 15, 44), and the reason for the gift is blessing, of which rest is the chief component.¹ It is a day of blessing in that there is no sin to be committed on that day. Freedom from work, freedom from sin, it is the latter that emphasizes the holy ('wholly other') nature of the institution. In one curious Defter passage we learn that 'Belial is driven from the Sabbath' (C. p. 45). Now the Samaritans did not believe in any evil force opposing God, at least not until about the seventeenth century; such a notion was unthinkable to them, and because of the extreme paucity of references it is not possible to include a chapter on demonology in a work on the theology of the Samaritans. Only an encyclopaedia of Samaritanism could rightly include that. When they say that Belial is driven from the Sabbath they are no doubt using a sort of metaphor based on the biblical belief that the goat was driven into the wilderness 'to Azazel' on the Day of Atonement, but even in their huge Liturgy for the Day of Atonement Azazel is mentioned only once!

The idea of freedom from sin and the possession on Sabbath of holiness led to a deeper concept of freedom for the soul.

What festival is there in the world like this . . . that frees the soul from toil? (C. p. 74.16.)

It is really the body that is freed from toil, leaving the soul (the other part of man that manifests animate life) free for spiritual enjoyments.² It was the freeing of the soul on Sabbath that led to Sabbath 'experience' as a thing of blessing and bliss. The soul thus freed, as it could never be during the six working days, the secular days, could enter into *rappport* with the ideal world of God. Thus developed the imagery of Sabbath as a great city, with definite bounds which could not be encroached upon or traversed by the material world, belonging to creation itself in a quite special way. We have noted the connection briefly, but now we must observe the special and most typical imagery of the garden in order that we may see what attitude at the spiritual level the Samaritans developed out of the biblical law.

In his greatness God blessed and sanctified this day. He made it as a beautiful city, built at the end of creation,³ the traversing of which none

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

² Man's component parts are so integrated that when a man's body toils his soul is in labour.

³ Cf. the biblical warrant, Gen. 2.2f.

can imagine, surrounded by eminent blessings and guarded by a faithful and mighty prophet whose like there is not among prophets (C. pp. 475.30-476.4).

Sabbath is regarded as one of Moses' most precious gifts from God to Israel.¹ His holy state is transferred to Sabbath, his unique status attributed to it. Another typical statement leads us to the final note of Sabbath as the ideal state while Israel are yet on earth. This is:

Sabbath is a royal city. Written at its entrance is 'There is none like God.'² Let every Hebrew who enters the city in peace look at the entrance and take note of what is written there. Let him prostrate himself on entering and sing praises on leaving. Let him glorify the Eternal One, for he blessed and hallowed it.³

That this is more than mere poetic imagery is indicated by the further shift that took place in thinking about the Sabbath state. This was the connecting of it directly with the mystical Garden of Eden. Now the Garden of Eden, of which we shall have more to say later, was thought of as man's original home and also as his future home, but it is specially interesting for the study of religious development that the Samaritans as early as Roman times had already developed the belief that life in the Garden of Eden could be enjoyed even while men were still on earth. This reminds the Christian of Christ's teaching about the Kingdom of God, and for all we know the Samaritans (and the Judaists, for they have a somewhat similar belief about Eden) may have been influenced by the Christian teaching. Whatever the truth of this may be, the Samaritans have left on record many passages expounding their particular view on the matter. Sabbath experience, Sabbath living, can be an expression of ideal living. Here is a representative passage from the Sabbath Liturgy that expresses such belief:

Sabbath is a beautiful garden, created from the days of Eden,⁴ where the last word (the Hebrew for Eden) can be translated 'delight'. Many passages throughout the Liturgy speak of the boundary of Sabbath as 'eternal Eden'. The locating of Eden on Mount Gerizim is a matter of great interest which we shall examine in the next chapter and also in Chapter XIX in connection with eschatology, for the Samaritans certainly developed quite remarkable beliefs

¹ This teaching, derived from E, finds the precious gift of Sabbath in the Ten Words pronounced by the Logos (Ex. 20).

² Cf. Rev. 21.12.

³ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

⁴ Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

about their holy mountain. At this point we see Sabbath experience directly associated with Eden experience. Less specific, but representing another step in the development of the Sabbath idea and possibly taking us a step nearer the Kingdom of God concept (an idea the Samaritans did not develop along Christian lines, unless in a very elementary way), is another Sabbath Liturgy passage which states that

In his greatness God made the Sabbath as a king upon a blessed throne. He filled its king with his sanctity; he made the blessing a sort of Eden and the holiness a sort of garden.¹

This last statement belongs to the sixteenth-century writer Abraham ha-Qabazi and there are other statements of the period from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries of the same ilk.

Nothing explicit is said about Sabbath being a Kingdom of God, with God as King, but something of this imagery is implied in many places. We are obliged to confine ourselves to the norm of Samaritanism and leave the rare and infrequent to more specialist studies. What is certain is that Sabbath, whether as a festival of thanksgiving or a state of blessedness, was a special mark that made the Samaritans stand out among the nations as a 'people of blessing', a people who had never had their own king² and had survived so long without the need for one. This unique status served one purpose. It was a means of grace at two levels which gave testimony of God, both as a mark of his elect and as an experience on earth of the ideal life which God promised would be eternally the bliss of the righteous of the world.

6 · REVELATION

*The Lord, the God of your fathers, has revealed himself to me in his own light and by his mighty will.*³

Much of what is contained in this section of our study of the means of grace has already appeared in other connections, and therefore we may be content with the briefest recapitulation. It is apparent from many writings that revelation and inspiration, conceived in the main to be but two aspects of the one process of communication (or communion), are regarded as special means of grace, quite different in character from those we have noted above. It is as if the Samaritans

¹ The Jaffa (Sabbath) MS, fol. 242.

² I.e. after the end of the Israelite monarchy in 722/1 BC.

³ Memar Markah I.2.

conceived of a twofold approach, at separate levels of conscious and unconscious experience, toward God, made possible by his willing manifestation of himself.

The first level is that which includes the proof of God's existence from his manifest glory in creation. By the observation of his creations men perceive the order and wisdom of the Prime Cause, whose will manifests itself in what his wisdom and power bring into being. Thus the glory of the sun, moon and stars, the trees and flowers, mountains and valleys, is the glory of him who created them. In this the Samaritans constantly find occasion for praise and thanksgiving. It is the revelation of God 'with which nothing can compare' in glory.

The same level of observation perceives in historical event the guidance and powerful influence of God. Thus history is read as a chronicle of God's dealings with men and with Israel in particular. God's revelation of himself is a source of confidence and security for Israel. This confidence is one of the outstanding characteristics of the worship. It may be justifiably said that the sense of security engendered is a characteristic of Samaritanism throughout much of its history. Through the dark glass of persecution and plague, war and want, the Samaritans could see, though dimly when the glass became very dark, the overall plan of God. Despite the times of severe affliction when doubts were greatest, the appeal to God's glory as revealed in creation and in history never became submerged in the mass of materialism and event.

It was the miraculous dealings of God in Moses that most of all impressed the Samaritan mind. There was no clever interpretation of events in terms of cause and effect, but there was a high degree of exegetical acumen when it came to placing the supernormal in its cosmic context. There was no attempt to regard the miraculous dealings of God on Israel's behalf as a sign of Israel's superiority over other nations, nor of Israel's special ability to please God. What the miraculous element in history really demonstrated for the Samaritan was proof that the God of the Patriarchs was still executing his plan for the world. In the Memar, Markah puts the following words into God's mouth as he speaks to Moses:

This miracle I have just shown you is done that they may believe that I am their Maker and the God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the three perfect ones with whom I made covenants (I.2).

Derived directly from the Pentateuchal interpretation of the miracle involved, the rod becoming a serpent in Moses' hand, the principle

of interpretation adopted continued to be the mainstay of Samaritan understanding of history. Miracles did not magnify Israel; they magnified God through Israel.

Apparently one aspect of God's revelation of his power that impressed the Samaritans even more than the Judaists was the presence during Israel's epic journey of the fire and the cloud. These phenomena were regarded as of cosmic origin, related directly to the *primal* fire which is the origin of all created things and to the mystical cloud which appears in cosmic settings in many connections, such as at the Mount Sinai theophany and at the death and assumption of Moses. It was a manifestation of the unseen in the seen, of the real in the unreal, of the higher in the lower world.

But perhaps the greatest single event that bespoke the divine revelation was the end of the era of revelation through angels and the beginning of the new dispensation, i.e. the lifetime of Moses, when God communicated with man directly. This highest of revelations came to be considered a subject for joyous and exultant expression, for it revealed how far God was prepared to go in letting Israel know his will and his presence with them throughout their travail. It is a once-and-for-all revelation. The seal has been set upon the former revelations to the Patriarchs.

It has been stated before that the revelation of God through Moses meant also the manifestation of the pure light of God in the human sphere; it meant, too, the revelation of his Word, spoken once and for all by and in Moses. God had taken man to himself in a special way when he called Moses 'my man', a revelation of God's care of and devotion to his elect that was to have everlasting value. We need only mention in passing other functions of Moses that demonstrate the revelation of God to man; such as the giving of the Law and the ethical teaching, the state of true holiness, the nature of social and international responsibility, the permanent value and validity of the priesthood, and so on.

The means of grace as a whole, election, the Law, circumcision, covenant, Sabbath, the divine presence on Mount Gerizim, are but revelations of God to Abraham and Moses, the former the physical progenitor of the nation that was to be chosen out of all the nations, the latter the spiritual progenitor of the elect of God.

We turn now briefly to revelation at the mental level, having considered the chief manifestations of God in the world at or through the physical level.

Thanks be to God, who caused the star of mind to shine as it 'orbits' in the firmament of the head (C. p. 375.28).

This was a theme that appealed to Abisha and other mediaeval teachers and was derived from the metaphysical and philosophical teaching of the Golden Era of the faith. In this field of studying the revelation of God through human mind the Samaritans did not lose sight of the physical revelations, but they conceived of a higher level of revelation which borders on the field of mystical communication. Leaving aside the obvious revelation of God in the world through creation and evolution, Abdallah turns frequently to the contrast between the manifest and the invisible God. A typical expression is

O he that is hidden from the gaze of the eyes, but is revealed to the meditations of the mind.

This revelation is observed as a result of conscious effort and may be identical in essence with inspiration, but we distinguish here between the two by making the former a conscious effort and the latter a sub-conscious. Where the two become inseparable in the Samaritan idiom is in the outcome of the preparation of the man of wisdom and insight; he prepares himself through long contemplation and meditation and opens the 'gate of the mind' to receive knowledge of God (through Moses, according to the latest mystics). The man who is inspired may be an ordinary man who has a dream in which he perceives the world of God, the realm of angels. In many cases such inspired persons are merely reacting to external stimuli, perhaps like Isaiah of Jerusalem in the Temple. The man of insight and discipline, however, has his visions stemming from his partial understanding, by way of mystical precognition, of their content. He perceives while his lesser brother receives.

Trotter, in his dissertation referred to previously, has examined the work of Ben Manir in this field, showing how he supported the idea that revelation is allied with reason. Ben Manir speaks of God as the one

who illumines the mind that can perceive him,

and often differentiates between ordinary intellect and spiritual insight. The fourteenth-century teacher believed that a man possessed of the intelligence of insight, which he apparently identified with wisdom, as distinct from knowledge acquired by reason and association, was in a state to receive revelation, for God had so

designed the human mind that it could be illumined (receive revelation) when it was trained for it. This is not true inspiration as usually understood, but it is a combination of human effort and progress with revelation from beyond the human mind. Trotter compares the teaching of the great Judaist teacher Maimonides,¹ showing that in mediaeval times such topics were studied with great care by the Judaists (and, of course, the Muslim philosophers, too). He mentions such remarks of Maimonides as 'How good it is to cling to observation' and 'Your eye is made for seeing', where he speaks in terms of insight rather than sight. The thought here, typical of Ben Manir and others, is closely similar to the saying of Jesus, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,'² where the reference is to the understanding of the mind.

Typical of the E stratum of the Pentateuch was the revelation by God through dreams. God's will for particular men could be made known by this means; so in the New Testament. The Samaritans throughout their history seem to have had strong belief in the efficacy of such revelation. We have several examples of these, but there is one that seems to have been set out on the analogy of the Revelation of St John. Before looking into this comparatively, we have to note that Abisha's Dream, the most famous example in the extant literature, seems to support the belief in a sort of apostolic succession, for he, a High Priest and therefore possessed of mystical knowledge transmitted from High Priest to High Priest, believed that he was commissioned by Moses (the source of such knowledge) to explain his dream to the Samaritan people under his pastoral care. We cannot take the dream to be a wholly objective phenomenon, because it is apparently derived for its ground from Jacob's dream at Bethel and extracts from the Revelation of St John. Whether this was a subconscious experience, in which his considerable knowledge of the Pentateuch and of Christian mystical teaching provided the framework, or whether it was a sort of mystical re-formation of his subconscious ideas stimulated by some psychical factor, we cannot discuss here, but we may regard the experience as typical of one aspect of revelation as seen by Samaritans to belong to the upper level of such experience.

Trotter has worked out the comparative material in an introductory way and we may examine it in brief here.

¹ *The Guide for the Perplexed*, ch. 68.

² E.g. Matt. 11.15 (AV).

*Abisha**St John*

C. pp. 366.29f.

| | | |
|---|--------|-------------------------------------|
| Dreams a dream | 21.10 | Carried away 'in the spirit' |
| Stands before Mount Gerizim | 21.10 | Carried to a high mountain |
| Angels are there | 21.12 | Angels are there |
| God's glory on the throne | 5.6 | The Lord in the midst of the throne |
| Approaches a gate; a man opens it | 21.12 | There are gates and angels |
| Asks attendant questions | 7.13f. | Question and answer |
| Abisha terrified; the 'Man' in the midst is Moses | 1.17 | Fell as though dead |

Other parallels are Abisha's mention of 'four arenas' (Rev. 21.16, 'the city lies foursquare'), 'Moses the faithful one over all my House' (3.14, 'Jesus the faithful witness'), 'Moses' light shone' (21.23, 'God's glory illumined it'), 'Moses the tree of life' (cf. 2.7; 22.2; 22.14), 'Moses given written tablets' (1.19; 14.13; 19.9; 21.5, 'write in a book'), 'Moses teacher of life' (13.8, 'Lamb's book of life').

This comparison has been merely a brief sketch and can serve as no more than an introduction to a field of study that goes beyond the scope of our examination in this book, but it does illustrate for us two important things: (1) the Samaritan concept of revelation matched by at least one Christian concept; (2) Samaritan dependence on Christianity, a fact we have seen evidence of on several occasions.

7 · INSPIRATION

*No man sees the Lord except through wisdom.*¹

In this subject we are dealing with a process, from the ground of human and therefore subjective experience. Inspiration for the Samaritan means primarily the deriving of truth through meditation. The man of meditation, however, is not just a reflective type of person, not just a thinker. The only sort of man capable of what the Samaritans understand by inspiration is the man who has reached a certain stage of progression through long preparation. He is a man who has observed (in more senses than one) all the laws of God's decree, has purified his body and his mind through discipline, has fasted, has sacrificed pleasure and ease, and altogether trained his physical self until it has become subject to his will. Such a man is capable of long periods of meditation and contemplation. This is not study only, for it involves the achievement of a certain state of experi-

¹ C. p. 60.22.

ence which can only be termed mystical. In that state he may have dream-like experiences in which his knowledge (*gnosis*) of spiritual values, laws and states provides settings for other-worldly experiences. One common feature of such experience is the observation, while in tranquil state, of the Garden of Eden, the invisible world, the true nature of the elements.

The Samaritan would not agree with the Judaist viewpoint illustrated by Eccus. 3.21f. (Hebrew) that men should not enquire into things beyond their normal comprehension.

Reflect on things that are permitted to you; you have no right to deal with the study of mysteries.

Moore, on whom the present writer has been dependent here, points out that the Book of Enoch (17-36, 39-44, 72-82 especially) on the other hand, exhibits mysteries of the universe that are beyond the bounds of human ken.¹

Judaism did not formulate any acceptable and binding principle on the question of man's rights in the matter of enquiry into the so-called mysteries. We do not know if the Samaritans ever discussed human rights in this field. What we do know is that in the extant literature, spanning seventeen centuries, it is almost always taken for granted that man has the right—if he is fit!

The man who receives superior knowledge through inspiration has travelled the road of lesser man, in that he has long perceived in the handiwork of the Creator something of the nature of God's will, wisdom and power. He has long examined the history of the elect people and discovered what he believes is the will of God for each member of the elect family. He has communed with the spirit of Moses (according to the later mediaeval belief) through the study of Moses' 'Word' and he believes that Moses' spirit continues to commune with those highly evolved in spiritual things.

Throughout his preparation he has manifested the light in him at an ever-increasing degree of radiance, and he is recognized by his contemporaries as a man endowed with 'wisdom from on high'. Some of the mediaeval teachers well typify this sort of man, and in their teaching they speak with a measure of authority which would normally be associated with Moses alone. There are all sorts of parallels between this and similar ideas in other religions, although the degree of authority assumed by such mystics is apparently higher

¹ Moore, *Judaism* I, pp. 383f.

than that found in the others. The notion of communion with Moses and the receipt of special teaching from him seems to suggest that the Samaritans believed, certainly from the fourteenth century on, in a kind of apostolic succession through the High-Priesthood, and for our purposes it is enough to observe the principle of continuing inspiration of men through the Word, Moses. We must call this inspiration rather than revelation, for as far as can be discovered in our present state of knowledge of these things in the Samaritan world the first move is made by man, the material which serves as the framework of mystical experiences is already in existence in the mind, and the interpretation of the experience is an interpretation following in the line of tradition over the centuries.

Nevertheless, such inspiration may be described as the experience of God's will and his declared (revealed) teaching. From it comes authority to teach men. Perhaps there is no greater merit than that in the practice of meditation on God and of his revelations of himself.

8 · PRIESTHOOD

*Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them that none of them shall defile himself. . . .*¹

The functions of the priesthood and the unique role of the High Priest as possessor of divine mysteries make the priesthood a means of grace, in that through it much that is demanded of the elect community is made possible. It is not perhaps usual to place the priesthood in a list of means of grace, but in the case of the Samaritan system of belief² we find the function of the priesthood to be a direct means of ensuring the pure state of the elect in the world.

The Samaritans claim for their priesthood direct and uninterrupted descent from Aaron (ultimately from Adam) through Phinehas and Zadok, and for them the tribe of Levi is dedicated and consecrated for the office of priests. The claim for the Zadokite priesthood is specially made by the prophet Ezekiel. He was dissatisfied with the behaviour of the Levitical priests of his day (Ezek. 44.10) and insisted that the true priesthood should be restricted to the Zadokites who, ever since the time of Solomon, had been in control of the Temple at Jerusalem. Professor J. Bowman has subjected the

¹ Lev. 21.1.

² Judaism has had no priesthood since AD 70, and therefore there is little real point of comparison with the Samaritan priesthood.

Samaritan claim to serious study¹ and has shown that the Samaritans adopted Ezekiel's view. The subject is a complicated one, but the Samaritan claim for a true line of descent from Aaron seems to be as strong as any opposing claim.

That the tribe of Levi were priests is the view expressed by Deuteronomy. Chronicle II tells how the two main bodies of Israelites in the time of the divided monarchy, Judaeans and Samaritans, each included some of the tribe of Levi, rather more of them being under the aegis of Judah. The description of the duties of the priests in Samaritan teaching match those of the Pentateuch. They have the double duty of giving instruction and performing the sacrifices. On the first of these the Samaritans believed that the priests, under the High Priest, were specially responsible for teaching the people the laws and for advising them in their day-to-day problems. It is quite distinctive of Samaritanism that the priest acts as head-man in every field of life. Having succeeded in doing without a king of their own for so many centuries, they placed on the High Priest the duties of secular as well as religious ruler. It is clear from the old chronicles that even as early as Joshua's time the High Priest had the ultimate authority. On many occasions the king of the day had to turn to the High Priest for instruction and guidance.

The High Priest was believed in Markah's time, as also in the mediaeval period, to be specially endowed in that he inherited by some sort of mystical succession certain special knowledge. This knowledge, passed on from High Priest to High Priest, included knowledge of the meaning and efficacy of the divine name and of the correct calendar. Indeed, only the High Priest could compute on Mount Gerizim the precise dates of the festivals. Much mystery is attached to this special knowledge and it would seem as though the Samaritans looked upon their High Priest as one who possessed spiritual information which it could never be right or safe for any layman or even ordinary priest to possess. The whole religious cult depended for its validity and efficacy on the exact knowledge of the High Priest. In the Day of Atonement Liturgy we have a typical expression of belief about this figure.

From fathers to sons, from priest to priest in succession to the chief of the priests . . . the man in whom is the spirit of God. . . . The spirit of holiness drops like rain into his heart, so that he has knowledge of the highest things (C. p. 710.11-15).

¹ In his article 'Ezekiel and the Zadokite Priesthood', *TGUOS* 16, 1957, pp. 1-14.

Thus at the national level the right state of the religious cult was ensured by the High Priest. Within this context the individual Samaritan Israelite had the assurance that his worship was true. As long as the priesthood maintained the regulations and kept itself free of defilement, the worshipper had the security of knowing that his worship was acceptable.

One heavy responsibility that lay on the shoulders of the priests was their obligation to witness to Israel as they tried to keep their side of the covenant. Markah describes this when he tells of Moses' concluding address to the priests.

Be witness between the True One and Israel, and do not forget this great position . . . the Lord has given you (Memar III.10).

Regarding their responsibility to maintain personal purity, he writes:

Your bodies are holy; do not make them unclean through anything abominable, nor defile them in sinning. The people would perish if you did, and shame for it would be on you! (*ibid.*).

Two other duties lie on the priesthood, duties which involve the imparting of grace to the people. One is the pronouncing of the blessing from 'pure mouths', by which the people are spiritually uplifted, and the other is the pronouncing of the Words of Forgiveness.

The priests themselves, and especially the High Priest, were under covenant from the time that God covenanted with Phinehas (Num. 25.13). While they had to maintain the people's side of the covenant between God and his elect, they had their own solemn responsibility to see to it that God's choice of them was not annulled.

To some extent the function of blessing, generation after generation, and the pronouncing of the divine name gave to the High-Priesthood a unique status, and as time went on his endowments became more and more the subject of wonderment and awe. The mystical knowledge possessed by Moses, as the Word of God, was transmitted from him through Aaron—according to the Law, 'And Aaron your brother shall be your prophet'—spokesman (Ex. 7.1: cf. Ex. 4.16 for the latter),—and hence on to Aaron's children and grandchildren, even to the end of the world. According to one poem:

The priesthood became perfect . . . in pronouncing the blessing with the secrets of the name of our Lord. This supports the congregation against all plague and violence (C. p. 773.17-18).

This is still believed today, although many plagues and many acts of violence have befallen the Samaritans. The only reason they can offer for this state of affairs is that the priesthood must have lost its purity by some defilement, and only when it is absolutely free of defilement is it capable of carrying out its responsibilities on behalf of Israel.

It is strange that the Samaritans apparently did not work out to some formulation the details of the belief in a chain of High Priests through whom knowledge of things supernatural was transmitted and that they did not leave on record more precise explanation of how the chain of descent continued for so long, despite the fact that not every High Priest in their history was all that he should have been. Yet no break in the transmission was contemplated until the High-Priesthood died out a few centuries ago. The explanation seems to be that another line of transmission was believed in and developed, a line of non-priests in the main. The Samaritan doctrine of the pure chain, as we may call it, is the next subject for study and can be regarded as a means of grace, in that many if not all Samaritans believed that it had efficacy for the people. It is not truly a means of grace in the sense that the divine institutions are, e.g. the Law and the Sabbath, but within the framework of religious thought and expressed within the liturgical corpus it finds a prominent place as an aid to approaching God.

Before leaving the subject of the priesthood, let us note that the Samaritan religion was the only direct descendant of Pentateuchal religion to maintain its priesthood, so that in the time of the Romans, after AD 70, no priesthood existed in Palestine other than the Samaritan. Despite national calamities of various kinds from then on and up to the present, the priesthood has maintained the religious order and cult of Samaritanism. The means of grace so far considered could be called the basis of the religion, but its chief means of sustenance and even survival has been the priesthood.

XIV

THE MEANS OF GRACE (B)

I · THE CHAIN OF PURITY

God accepted Adam's repentance and reared from him the pure chain from which he raised up the prophet of God.¹

THE DOCTRINE OF the pure chain is directly associated with and dependent on several other doctrines. It is in no way difficult to isolate this doctrine and examine it in its own right, while at the same time seeing its proper place within the wider context of Samaritan ideologies. It may be regarded as the first of the 'man-made' means of grace, or human as distinct from divine institutions, to be considered in this chapter.

This doctrine expresses on the one hand the historical evolution from the first man in creation to the supreme human in creation, namely the Man of God. On the other hand, it expresses the sequence of purity in the world by which the elect status of Israel in the world is validated and by which God's promises and blessings become efficacious.

The pure chain is a concept that is to be found involved in several other beliefs. It is not at all prominent in the traditions of Judaism, but it is found in Islam, expressed in a form close to the Samaritan formulation. In the Koran 3.14 we read that 'Allah exalted Adam and Noah, Abraham's descendants and the descendants of Imran (= Amram) above all his creatures'.²

The origin of the concept of a pure chain of righteous men is unknown, but the present writer believes there are grounds for believing that the first form of the doctrine was stated in terms only of the priesthood, from Aaron and his sons onwards.

O God of Aaron, Eleazar, Ithamar . . . Phinehas . . . who received the reward, the High-Priesthood, for himself and his descendants, in

¹ Malef 43.

² As translated by N. J. Dawood, *The Koran*, Penguin Classics, 1956, p. 397.

descent from priest to priest, up to the Arkon of this age, the successor to the pure chain (C. p. 246.21f.).

The priestly chain,¹ which provides the framework of the best chronicles, is thus related to the pure chain. One of the fundamental obligations of the priest is that of purity and the maintenance of the religious (historical) cult in purity. However, the doctrine as it normally appears in the pages of Samaritan works rarely refers specifically to the priestly chain. Towards the end of this section of the chapter something will be said further in support of the argument that the original chain of purity consisted of priests' names.

The doctrine is not associated with any one period. It is to be found, albeit inchoate, in the Golden Age, and is already matured in the Silver Age. In late mediaeval and modern times it is an integral part of the whole soteriological structure of the Samaritan religion.

In the Liturgy for the Festival of Unleavened Bread we have the following statement:

The Power who created our father Adam . . . and made his posterity a chain, from descendant to descendant, until the coming of our lord Moses, the sun and light of the world (C. p. 207.4-6).

This and other late passages leave us in no doubt that the Samaritans regarded the historical figure of Moses as the culmination of a long history which had been predestined by God from the very moment of creation. For example, we read in the Liturgy for the Festival of Tabernacles:

God established Eve from one of Adam's ribs. . . . He married them and a pure chain was linked together, stemming from them (C. p. 745.15-17).

Adam as a figure of purity in his pristine, unfallen state is found in other sources, notably Judaism, but in Samaritanism he is primarily the first in a line of pure men, in whom the pure light, derived from the light that was before creation, shone brightly. He himself was not in any way the inaugurator of the purity, but merely the first of the righteous of the world in whom that light shone.

In the study of the divine light in connection with the Logos we find that the pure light enters into men at their birth (cf. John 1.9). To express this in another way, the divine light, the light of purity, enters into certain men in history (possibly into all men, but in most the light is scarcely manifest) by a process of reservation of a 'drop'

¹ *Salsalel*. The most complete chain is set forth in Chronicle V.

of that light. How the process was conceived by the Samaritans, as distinct from the Gnostics, is expressed in the Tabernacles Liturgy:

The origin of this word (Logos) is from the time that he said, 'Let there be light.' God transmitted it as a drop of light and he observed that it was good. It was, however, concealed (=reserved) till the time of the nativity of . . . every pure one in his generation (C. p. 749.18-20).

Thus from the pre-existing light a drop comes forth and enters men, but only in certain individuals known as 'the righteous of the world' does the light radiate. When Moses was born, that light was all radiant, brilliant to the maximum in the world of lower things.

A variant to the theme outlined above is to be found in the same Liturgy at a later point:

A deep sleep fell on Adam and God took one of his ribs and from it established a wife for him. He then married them, so that there might come into being those who would populate the earth. He chose from the elect of their posterity an unblemished chain, comprising twenty-six meritorious persons (C. p. 759.26-28).

According to this picture of the purpose involved in the creation of man, the men constituting the pure chain were selected (elected) out of a larger number, so that there is no statement here of men being predestined before their birth to have a place in the pure chain. However, the former picture is apparently the standard one, the norm of the Samaritan view of most periods.

The predestination of God's will that there should be such a chain of righteous ones is rarely stated in an explicit way, and the majority of writers prefer to think of those in whom the 'drop of light' had been placed being put to the test during life. Judaism, too, has its traditions about the trials of the Patriarchs, but the Samaritan concept is framed differently. According to the Malef each of the righteous three (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) experienced ten trials each.¹

We may now ask who are the meritorious ones who constitute the chain of purity. In our examination of the doctrine of merit in the next section of this chapter we find the same figures and for the same reasons. In a passage quoted above it was stated, in quotation from an eighteenth-century writer, that there are twenty-six meritorious ones. Nowhere does a complete list of this order appear in the sources

¹ The Malef 121; see further the Commentary on the Asatir V.9 and especially Gaster, *Asatir*, p. 221. See also the Commentary on the Asatir I.27 (Gaster, *op. cit.*, pp. 191f.) for Adam.

studied, but there are some lists that are fairly long. The chapter on merit should be studied for these lists, but in direct connection with the chain of purity, as distinct from the meritorious ones, we have the following:

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Eleazar, Ithamar, Phinehas (C. p. 713.16f.).

This eighteenth-century passage from the pen of Tabiah b. Isaac provides a typical list of the most important personages as seen from the priestly point of view. A separate tradition¹ fills in the genealogical period of the first dispensation from Adam to Noah. According to this, the first period of the pure chain consisted of:

Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mehalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.

The two lists we have so far presented give a total of nineteen righteous ones.

There are many passages that suggest that the list should include Joshua and Caleb and the seventy elders, but these might be adjudged to belong to the chain of merit more strictly. It is probably necessary to keep a distinction in mind between the two chains,² although from the doctrinal viewpoint they cannot be separated. It is rather that the pure chain consists primarily of men whose lives in no instant revealed any blemish. Thus in the list of the meritorious many biblical characters appear who were not renowned, even in Samaritan eyes, for their single-minded purity. That the Samaritans themselves did not categorize these lists well is clear from the fact that some members of the list first quoted cannot be said to have lived lives of absolute purity. Such is Jacob, but the Patriarchs, it could be said, stand in a category apart because of their status of 'roots' or 'origins', whereby new streams of posterity were derived and hence the pure chain was continuously preserved.

We learn from Abdallah in his famous hymn on the Birth of Moses (C. pp. 746-53) that

It was the chain of purity that linked Moses with Adam.

From Adam the four elements developed; Abdallah does not mention the fifth, as understood in ancient and mediaeval philosophy, but it would be reasonable to regard it as purity. It was this fifth element,

¹ Malef 59.

² There is also a third chain, that of the High Priests, known as *Salsalet ha-Kohanim* (*ha-Gedolim*).

which preceded creation and therefore the four elements, that distinguished the members of the chain. 'The holy drops of pure posterity', as Abdallah calls it, permeated humanity, but came to light, full radiance, in those capable of spiritual progression.

The 'realization' of the pure light is said to have been 'taken hold of' by Abraham, giving us a clue to the Samaritan concept of individual awareness of the pure state or pure light within. At some point in the life of the individual the purity (an essence) manifested itself. Thus Abraham, for example, became a member of the chain when he accepted without question the angelic command to sacrifice his son.¹ So Isaac is held to have become a full member when he willingly accepted his role of sacrificial victim, not questioning God's command.² Jacob's reaction to his vision, his dedication of himself to the way of God, was the turning-point in his life that changed him from Jacob 'the supplanter' to 'Jacob the perfect one'. All three passed through their trials successfully. The light of purity had radiated in them.

A distinction must now be made between Moses the prophet in history and Moses the Logos. Abdallah elsewhere sets out a further element in the doctrine when he says:

Through Moses God made the pure chain to be transmitted from Adam to the son of Lamech . . .³ to him and his sons the Patriarchs . . . holy drops of pure posterity on to Abraham (C. p. 747.4f.).

In this context Adam is called the first pure man, Noah the second, Abraham the third. Three sets of generations are represented here. Abdallah goes on in a later stanza of his hymn to state that it was by God's will that Abraham 'branched forth' and took hold of the pure chain, by (possessing) which he was enabled to release Isaac (from the sacrificial altar). We now perceive a further development of the doctrine, in that the realization of innate purity is responsible for the meritorious acts that make a man 'a man of merit'. In this way we can observe the probable line of development in Samaritan thought in this connection. First there is the light from before creation, from which a 'drop' of pure light, the fifth element, is transmitted to man, possibly after the manner of John 1.9. Men predestined to manifest that light find themselves in the course of their lives in a situation in which the realization is manifested. Once possessed and realized

¹ So in Judaism; cf. Moore, *Judaism* I, pp. 538f.

² *Ibid.*

³ And so on as in the list quoted above from the Malef 59.

(apprehended), the purity enables them to perform meritorious actions. In the course of history such men come to be regarded as meritorious rather than just possessors of purity. To the theologian their possession of the pure light is a fundamental element in the human story, but to the simple man the meritoriousness of such men is much more real.

As in Islam, so in Samaritanism (and to a lesser extent in Judaism and Christianity) it gradually became common religious practice to supplicate the deity by the merit of the pure. Hence

We make supplication in the name of the members of the chain of merit (C. p. 241.27).

One further element in the belief in a pure chain is that through the chain secret knowledge was transmitted, a process already noted in consideration of the priesthood. According to the Malef (48-49), when Adam was driven from Eden the rod was in his possession,¹ the rod of God. It is to be noted that the E stratum of the Pentateuch showed interest in the rod of Moses; so the Samaritans may have here a very ancient tradition indeed. According to the Asatir and the Malef the true calendar was written on the rod, and it contained the Book of the Wars, the Book of the Signs and the Book of Astronomy. The tradition is that Noah in time received the rod, and took the three mystical books from it seven years after Adam's death. The rod and books were handed on to Shem's sons, Arpachshad, Aram and Asshur. They were retained by Arpachshad² and then handed on *in the holy chain* to Jethro, who gave them to Moses.³

The rod, existing from creation and transmitted through the holy chain, was to be recovered in the time of the Second Kingdom by the Taheb (Malef 50). The secret books⁴ were supposed to provide to Moses knowledge of all things, but this tradition seems inferior to the belief that it was his (Logos) prophetic status that gave him such knowledge. However, the whole tradition is undoubtedly tied up with the teaching that mystical knowledge was passed on from

¹ This is the magical rod which Moses wielded to Israel's advantage. See the Asatir 9.20-22 and the Commentary on it.

² Cf. Gen. 10.22. But see the Asatir (Gaster, p. 228), for a variant detail of transmission.

³ Cf. the Judaist tradition that it was Zipporah who led Moses to receive the rod (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Vol. II, pp. 291f.).

⁴ Cf. the Secret Books of Adam in Mandaeism. See also Gaster's long introductory examination of the relationship of the Samaritan traditions with those of Judaism and the Apocrypha.

High Priest to High Priest, including *par excellence* knowledge of the true calendar and the true dating of the Taheb's coming.

The chain of purity therefore involves the transmission of secret knowledge, and thus the history of Israel and the world is linked with the chain of purity.

Interest in the chain, no doubt an ancient tradition, declined after the end of the High-Priesthood and in its place came the closely similar chain of merit, a chain whose members are not precisely the same as those in the older chain.¹ The normal practice came to be that petitions were offered 'by the merit of the meritorious ones', i.e. those who by their *work and witness* had earned God's favour. Their meritorious status linked them closely with the members of the pure chain and the two concepts tended to merge. When there was no High Priest and therefore the transmission of the secret knowledge had ceased, to worshipping man, anxious to please God, it was acts, not mystical knowledge, that really mattered. Men looked for those in history who had actually pleased God by their actions, their pure status being the origin of their works.

The ancient belief that God 'injected' the finest specimens of humanity with drops of pure light meant that God's purposes for mankind were assured. The righteous of the world in their purity enabled the highest level of the community to shine in the world. Here we have a means of grace that has wider signification than those which enabled Israel to retain its elect status. Once again the purity of the race is assured as man progresses onwards along the road to the ideal life.

2 • MERIT

*This doctrine of the merits of the Fathers takes the same place in Samaritan doctrines as the corresponding teachings in Judaism, and the later extravagant development of the merits of the saints in Christianity.*²

When the Samaritans developed their doctrine of merit is not known with any degree of certainty. It seems clear from a study of the sources that an embryo form of it certainly existed in the Roman era, but its fully fledged form is not found until the fourteenth century. As we have seen in connection with the doctrine of the pure

¹ A good example of the High-Priestly claim in the period when the High-Priesthood still existed is Abisha's statement:

I am a progeny of the prophets; I cannot lie (C. p. 515.26).

² Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 231.

chain, it is the mediaeval period that demonstrates the matured doctrine, but this is not to say that the doctrine did not exist for centuries in an undeveloped form—and in any case we possess so little literature from the period of the fourth to the fourteenth centuries. There is also the question of possible doctrinal differences between the eastern and western Samaritans. What can be stated with some degree of confidence is that most of the doctrines of the liturgical literature from the eastern side appear in the fourteenth century already mature. In the *Defer* and in the *Memar of Markah* the doctrine of merit is present, implicit rather than explicit, but the amount of literature represented by these two works is small compared with the huge bulk of liturgical material from the fourteenth century on.

We may look to Ex. 32.11-13 and Deut. 9.27 for the biblical origin of or warrant for the doctrine. In these passages we have the supplication of the righteous three, so prominent in the Samaritan system of belief. Judaism shares with Samaritanism this belief in the merits of the forefathers. Moore quotes Rabbi Hezekiah ben Hiyya (third century AD):

Moses' intercession was not accepted by God until he had made mention of the good desert of the forefathers. God said to him, Moses, if it were not for the good desert of their forefathers, I would destroy them; you cannot adduce any good desert in the people itself (as a reason for sparing them).¹

Judging from some mediaeval exegetical commentaries, Judaism and Samaritanism shared a closely similar view on this matter; how early we cannot say.

There is, however, as early as the *Memar* a full list of the meritorious:

By the merit of Adam, Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses.²

The sheer paucity of illustrations of the doctrine in the Roman period does not necessarily connote complete absence of a developed doctrine. The fact that *Markah* does give one list shows that the doctrine was in existence, and in any case we cannot argue from silence! *Markah* may not have been particularly enthusiastic for this doctrine. He was a man of wisdom, a teacher, and frequently taught

¹ *Judaism* I, p. 537, quoting Tanhuma (ed. Buber), Wayyera 9.

² See below for a brief discussion of such lists.

the need for a man to depend on his own efforts. Theologically he might well, if occasion had demanded—which it did not—have expounded the doctrine, but in the practical lay language for which he is distinguished at times man's own achievements (helped by the *divinely* instituted means of grace) in moral things were the true test. In view of Markah's stress there was little room, or perhaps opportunity, to centre his doctrine of salvation on other men's efforts, with the obvious exception of Moses'; even for Markah, Moses was the saviour of Israel! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in his view, were certainly the righteous, meritorious ones, and through their righteousness Israel was *aided* toward the conditions of living through which God's deliverance would come. But the Patriarchs had done their share; their merit could only be an aid.

In the fourteenth century there is manifested a distinct picture of merit based on works and not just on righteousness. The expression 'by the merit of' is the translation of a Hebrew term (*b'amal*) which literally means 'by the work of'. The alternative rendering 'for the sake of', in the Christian sense, is inaccurate and misleading. There are many passages which show that the term meant 'by the merit of'. The parallel expression *bzekut* is also translated 'by the righteousness of', but the Samaritans seem to have meant 'by the meritoriousness of'. Needless to say, the former Hebrew expression is far more common and the Samaritan writers seem to have preferred to speak of works and less often of righteousness.

The two expressions just mentioned may also reflect two doctrines which existed at one time side by side, but developed from different sources. If we may attempt some chronological assessment of them, we may say that the doctrine of the pure chain, with its Gnostic background, had become standard in mediaeval times. The other, the doctrine of *zekut* or meritoriousness, may have had a longer history judging from the appearances of it as early as Markah's day, but it did not receive the same external stimulus as the other doctrine. Christianity had developed a doctrine of the work of Christ long before the fourteenth century and as far as Moses was concerned it was his *'amal* rather than his *zekut* that was acclaimed as a source of merit. As we see in many connections, the Samaritans saw in Moses much that Christians saw in Christ. The doctrine of work could well have received stress through Christian influence. This may have happened at any time between the fourth and fourteenth centuries, but it is possible that the greatest stress came during the

time of the Crusades, i.e. from about the eleventh century, when Samaritanism came face to face with militant Christianity.

Looking at the matter from another standpoint, we may see the doctrine of merit as the final stage of a process begun with the Gnostic concept of pure light transmitted from God. The belief in the pure chain did not develop so early, but the belief in the pure light was there in early times. The setting out of the various chronicles, a field in which there was much activity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in a priestly framework may have caused belief in the chain (*salsalel*) of purity to flourish, since the element of transmission was fundamental to it, but attention to the belief in the efficacy of works, early though it must have been originally, did not come to its active state until Christian influence was powerful. Whatever be the truth of the matter, the modern position is clear. The hymnists and priests do not any longer differentiate between *'amal* and *zekut* for purposes of efficacy.

There is yet another element in the doctrine, represented chiefly in modern compositions. In time there came into being the practice of expressing petitions 'in the name of. . . .' Usually this took the form of 'in the name of the meritorious ones' and rarely in the shorter form 'in the name of. . . .' This additional practice may have come from either Christianity or Islam. At an earlier time the practice applied to petitions 'in the name of God' and even 'in the name of Moses', though the latter is far from common before the eighteenth century. Prayers 'in the name of Moses' came to be regarded as specially efficacious. This suggests Christian influence. As time went on and the practice was given wider range, Roman Christianity may have influenced Samaritanism increasingly, so that all the members of the pure chain and the meritorious ones came to be regarded in much the same way as the saints of Christianity. Thus prayers could be offered 'by the meritoriousness of' Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and his sons, and so on. The normal practice in Judaism has also been to expand the list beyond the three Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For instance, the names of David and Solomon are found added in Judaist practice.

Let us observe now how the particular members of the list of the meritorious came to be chosen. According to the Commentary on the *Asatir*,¹ every one of the meritorious had to suffer severe affliction

¹ Gaster, *Asatir*, p. 221.

during his lifetime. This affliction is regarded as a series of trials sent by God to make them dependent on him and purify them of any sins they committed, any blemish they incurred in the world. Once they repented of their sins and removed their blemish God glorified them and they have glory in the world to come. This teaching matches closely what was said previously in connection with the pure chain. It was not merely that certain men in history had done commendable actions; it was that they were possessed of special endowments—as members of the chain of purity beginning from the pristine Adam—through which they were released from secular bondage and dependence on physical conditions and liberated into the world of things divine, where God's will is always carried out.

That many writers thought of the men of merit as stemming from Abraham and not from Adam is made clear from several sources. We read in the Asatir:¹

Joshua said: O you dwellers in the cave, O you meritorious ones of the world, do your spirits realize what is in store for your descendants?

O you son of Terah, *root of the perfect and meritorious ones*, do you know that the plants of your garden, which you planted (after Gen. 21.33), are being spoilt through sins and contumacy?

Abraham in this passage becomes the root of the meritorious, and thus it is made clear that in the time of the Asatir there had not taken place the merging of the doctrines of merit and of the pure chain.

It is never easy to conclude whether Samaritanism owed some of its doctrinal developments to Islam or whether Islam borrowed from the then large Samaritan community. In the study of the doctrine of merit it has to be noted that Islam, like Christianity, taught a chain of merit from patriarch to patriarch or righteous man to righteous man. We have seen what the Koran (3.14) has to say. Admittedly the statement there could be interpreted along physical lines alone, that the persons mentioned did, in fact, descend one from the other in a genealogical tree; but when we turn to Shi'ite Islam we find the Samaritan-type doctrine in full development. Thus in Shi'ism the Imam of the community possesses *the divine light* and only those who place their faith in him will be saved on the Day of Judgement. G. E. von Grunebaum states:²

¹ Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

² *Muhammadan Festivals*, pp. 85f.

In recent theological formulation the *imams* are defined as 'immaculate, innocent of any sin, small or great, co-equal, endowed with every virtue, knowledge and power'. And 'all blessings and all knowledge of God comes through them; through them the universe lives and moves and has its being.'

The Samaritans of any period could have applied such beliefs to Moses, but they never went so far as to include the meritorious ones in the scheme of direct revelation from God to man. They merely remained inspirations to higher endeavour; they were so pure and righteous that the contemplation of them brought spiritual benefit; prayers 'by the merit of' were especially efficacious. The merit was theirs, not the petitioners'. Perhaps something of their merit could be acquired by the contemplation of it and the placing of spiritual hope and trust in it, but the merit was in no way communicable.

Fundamentally, in the Samaritan position so clearly stated by Markah, it is the sinner's own change of heart and deep contrition for sins done that makes it possible for the processes of forgiveness to begin. Ultimately it is the will of God that settles the matter, but the merits of Moses are highly active; conjoined with this is the fact that the petitioner who petitions by the merit of the forefathers in reality associates himself in a corporate way with the whole people, the people whose salvation is wrought through the historical and ever-living Moses, saviour of Israel.

Having determined the chief factors underlying the concept of the doctrine of merit, let us observe some of the statements made in the liturgies.

By the merit of those who dwell in the cave of Machpelah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and by the merit of Joseph and our lord Moses, who received the Law from God (C. p. 156.22-24).

This passage from the First Month Liturgy introduces two essential elements in the doctrine. In the first place, the meritorious ones are located. They do not exist in some state in heaven, seated in honour, where they can appeal to God on behalf of the Israelite sinner. The Samaritan position here is thus far removed from the position of Latin Christianity. The meritorious are dead; they can do nothing personally for a man. It is their works 'that follow them', to which appeal may be had.

In the second place we have here a mention of the reason, or one of the reasons, for the merit of Moses, namely the receiving of the Law. We have noted examples of the reason for merit being ascribed

to particular biblical personages. They were meritorious because of the manifestation of the light of purity within.

The expression of the doctrine in supplicatory terms depends a good deal on the purpose of the supplication. Not all such prayers are for purely spiritual benefits; some are for material well-being and freedom from persecution in this world. Thus Abdallah can say:

Prosper my toil by the merit of righteous Joseph (C. p. 214.25).

Such prayers are frequent from the fourteenth century on, prayers for the relief and peace and prosperity of the individual and the community. The majority of 'merit prayers', however, are for spiritual benefits.

The continued life of the holy nation is a frequent subject for prayers by the merit of the righteous. The Day of Atonement Liturgy provides many typical illustrations of this.

May you become a fine kingdom, with no more enemies . . . by the merit of Adam and Noah [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob]¹ and the priests . . . (C. pp. 665.14f.).

In the Liturgy *passim* we have many examples of the following type:

May you perform this fast and your festival days for a hundred years² by the merit of the three and the king³ and Ben Amram your prophet. . . .

We come finally to the position obtaining in the modern period. Here we observe some further expansion of the list of the meritorious, an expansion which includes the impersonal. We have seen in connection with the chain of purity that persons of the antediluvian period, from Adam to Noah, were included, and then various personages from Noah on, including the Patriarchs and later priests. The list there went on to include the seventy elders with Joshua and Caleb. So far this list could equally well apply to the doctrine of merit. For the sake of completeness we may mention the list of the meritorious here: Adam, Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses (in Memar I.9, for example), Aaron, Eleazar, Ithamar, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb and the seventy elders. The list so far is typical of the fourteenth- to sixteenth-century lists in the main. The modern period, by which we mean after the

¹ The names are not mentioned for these three, only features of their lives that identify them.

² The possible eschatological signification of this period will be discussed later.

³ I.e. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—the three—and Joseph—the king.

seventeenth century, reveals a trend of expansion in terms of beliefs. A nineteenth-century writer, Isaac b. Solomon, takes the list of the meritorious to its fullest extreme:

By the merit of Adam and the perfect Noah, and your father Abraham, Isaac the righteous, Jacob the vower, Joseph the interpreter, him whom God sanctified (Moses), Aaron and his sons, him who was zealous (Phinehas), by the holy instruction (Torah), Joshua and Caleb, the goodly mount and the great name, glorious in holiness (C. p. 112.24-27).

It is evident that Samaritanism in its modern guise contains elements that are the product of decadence. As long as it was founded on and warranted in the Law and expanded through Christian influence, it was a reasonable, carefully formulated system of doctrines. As Islam crept more and more within the sphere of the Samaritans, they began to use Islamic style benedictions, Muslim-type prayers, and in the end, it seems, even things came to be the objects of merit. Let us finish our list in the modern period, but using a list from the pen of Samaritanism's best liturgist of modern times. It is from the writings of Tabiah, the eighteenth-century poet.

By the merit of the three, the king, Moses your prophet, him who set up lights in your holy tabernacle (Aaron), Eleazar, Ithamar, and Phinehas who slew your enemies.

Historical Samaritanism still holds some ground in the eighteenth century.

3 · THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

*The place which the True One has chosen, the place of blessing,
the dwelling-place of the angels, the house of the great Divine
One, the place of his glory, the place of forgiveness by the True
One.*¹

Belief in Mount Gerizim as the chosen place for the true sanctuary and worship of God is the fourth tenet of the creed. The warrant for such a belief is found in the Samaritan tenth commandment and other passages. The ten commandments of the Masoretic text count as nine, and the Samaritan text's tenth completes the Ten Words supposedly received by Moses on the two stone tablets on Mount Sinai.²

Standing nearly 3,000 feet above the sea, Mount Gerizim dominates

¹ Memar Markah III.2.

² For a full discussion of the Tenth Commandment see M. Gaster, *The Samaritans*, pp. 185f. See also Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 234.

the Shechem valley in central Palestine, with Mount Ebal on the opposite side of the valley. According to Deut. 11.29 and 27.12, it was the scene of the reading of the blessings and curses at the time when the Hebrew tribes entered Canaan. Markah describes the blessings and curses in full in the Memar III.3, explaining why some tribes received the former and some the latter.

The Samaritans apply many biblical passages to Mount Gerizim. So it is called 'the mount of inheritance' (Ex. 15.17).¹ Although only mentioned twice in the Pentateuch by name, the Samaritans find scores of references to it by implication. According to Markah's study there are thirteen names for the sacred mount; these are:

- The mountains of the East (Gen. 10.30)
- Bethel (Gen. 12.8)
- The house of God (Gen. 28.17)
- The gate of heaven (*ibid.*)
- Luza/Luz (Gen. 28.19)
- Sanctuary (Ex. 15.17)
- Mount Gerizim (Deut. 11.29)
- The house of the Lord (Ex. 23.19; 34.26)
- The goodly mount (Deut. 3.25)
- The chosen place (*ibid.*)
- The everlasting hill (Deut. 33.15)
- One of the mountains (Gen. 22.2)
- The Lord will provide (Gen. 22.14)

Markah's list, in the above order, provides the key to the supreme place the Samaritans attribute to Mount Gerizim, for each verse quoted provides some aspect of the belief in the nature, status and efficacy of it. After Markah every Samaritan to discuss the subject depended on his categories, but Markah's list omits 'mount of inheritance' (C. p. 282 has it in an otherwise identical list). In Chronicle II it is regular practice to describe the mountain as 'Mount Gerizim, Bethel, the chosen place'. This is done with tedious repetition and well represents the standard Samaritan practice in naming the mountain in their literature.

Luza (the usual Samaritan for Luz) is identified with Bethel in the Pentateuch, and the Samaritans placed the village on the north-west slope of Mount Gerizim so that Mount Gerizim = Bethel, the place of the great patriarchal vision of the angels. At that spot they still celebrate the Passover according to the ancient northern Israelite practice. On rarer occasions a writer can speak of the mountain as

¹ RSV: 'thine own mountain'.

Mount Moriah, a procedure only made possible by the philological identification of that name with the Hebrew name for 'The Lord will provide', otherwise translated 'The Lord will be seen' in Gen. 22.14. From this identification comes the warrant for the belief that God's presence is to be found on the mountain of the Samaritans.

We now take a brief look into history to see what events the Samaritans associate directly with their holy mountain, before noting the nature and unique status of the mountain. From Adam to Joshua, the chief biblical personages visited the scene and left their testimony to its being God's chosen place in the world. At creation when the dry land was uncovered Adam was created from the pure dust of the mount. According to Markah (Memar II.10) Adam prostrated before it, Abel built the first altar there, Enosh proclaimed in the name of the Lord upon it, Enoch hastened to it, Noah built an altar before it; likewise did Abraham. In the time of Noah, at the end of the flood, Mount Gerizim was the dry land from which the dove brought back the olive leaf. Noah built his altar there after descending from the ark. Thus the 'goodly mount' was the first place after the birth of humanity and after the rebirth of humanity to be dedicated by man before God.

Mount Gerizim . . . the place whereon Isaac was bound (c. p. 78.24). After Isaac, Jacob had his Bethel dream there, and Joseph's body was conveyed there from Egypt. Joshua's stones are there.

Another reason for its supreme place and sanctity was the fact (if it is a fact!) that the mount contained the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23) wherein were buried the Patriarchs and others. Joseph's cave is there. Joshua is held to have been buried on the southern slope of the mount. There is an altar attributed to each of the Patriarchs, Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, these altars being nowadays (as for centuries) stopping-places on certain annual festival pilgrimages.¹

There are many other localities on the mountain with which are linked historical claims of this sort, but we have to observe rather the beliefs held about the mountain, being content to state as above the chief names given to it, from which come most of the claims made for it. One of the chief of these is that it is everlasting. It is

Enduring from the day God created it even till the Day of Vengeance (Memar II.10).

¹ Further support for the ancient sanctity of the mount and the surrounding area seems to be provided by II Chron. 10.1.

As the Judaists, in some of their old traditions, hold that the original streams emanating from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2) are located at Mount Zion, so the Samaritans claim for Mount Gerizim, and it is regarded as the very navel of the world. A similar idea comes from Greek sources about Delphi. That Mount Gerizim was founded by God as his dwelling-place right from creation itself is attested from many sources, but we shall examine the relationship between the mount and the Garden of Eden in Part Five, where we have to consider an aspect of belief in the mount that has to do with the ideal world.

The Samaritans placed their temple there in the time of the First Kingdom.¹ This was destroyed by the Assyrians in the eighth century BC. The rebuilt temple of the fifth century (Josephus says there was a temple on Mount Gerizim before 330 BC) was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 129 BC and it was apparently still there in a ruined state in New Testament times. According to the chronicles, God hid the ark and temple vessels in a vast cave on the mount at the beginning of the period of divine disfavour at the time of Eli, and it is believed that it is one of the Taheb's functions to reveal these in preparation for the restoration of true worship on Gerizim.²

We turn now to the beliefs of the Samaritans about the mount that are derived chiefly from the names listed earlier in the chapter. The first and foremost claim for Gerizim is that God's presence (Shekhinah) is there, an idea familiar from early Judaism with regard to Zion. The basic biblical warrant for the Samaritans is Ex. 33.22f.

Mount Gerizim is specially holy. God made it the dwelling-place of his glory (Memar II.10).

It is thus sacrosanct and so

A foreigner cannot ascend Mount Gerizim or stand in the place of the blessing (Memar III.4).

Another reason for ascribing such holiness to it lies in the identification of it with the place of Jacob's dream (at Bethel), where he saw angels ascending and descending and, even more significant, where he saw God. Later we shall have more to say about the sacred mountain's other-worldly status, but we may mention here that the Samaritans as early as Markah's time associated the supernatural experience of Jacob with Mount Gerizim, so that it eventually

¹ This was a *hekhal* in addition to the *miškan*.

² The biblical warrant for the establishment of the tabernacle is Deut. 27.2-8.

became identified as a half-way house between heaven and earth.

The brief summary so far given obviously reveals Mount Gerizim as possessing a status which could be shared with no other place. It becomes the Mecca of the Samaritans (to use a figure of much later origin) and to this day they turn towards the mount, wherever they are, when saying their prayers, as the Judaists do to Jerusalem, and the Muslims to Mecca. Observe the liturgical practice in the following quotation, where Mount Gerizim is mentioned by one of its thirteen names:

Toward the gate of heaven let us turn. Let us set our stance at the place of the angels and the gate of our supplication (C. p. 488.21-22).

What might be termed an extravagance was the repetitious liturgical poetry of the later period, from the twelfth century, when every epithet available could be applied in prayers of petition. A typical example is:

Lord, unite me with Mount Gerizim . . . the abode of the angels . . . the place where Isaac was bound . . . the place where Jacob slept . . . which Moses longed for (C. p. 78.22f.).

Such passages are legion and bespeak the attitude of the later Samaritans, especially in times of great depression and poverty, when thoughts turned more and more toward 'the gate of heaven' and to him who would accept the penitent there.

It is always firmly stated that Mount Gerizim is the only place where sacrifice is acceptable and praises and prayers are efficacious. In actual fact the Samaritans were not always able to perform their sacrifices and prayers on the mount, owing to political restrictions, and they were obliged to construct special services for the festivals on these occasions, but all that was under considerable protest. The heart of the worshipper always lay with the mount. Markah expresses the attitude of all periods when he writes:

There is to be no sacrificing except on it, no offering anywhere else, no oblation anywhere else, no freewill offering, tithe, firstfruit, deliverance or blessing received apart from it ever, for it is the place of the True One's presence and the dwelling place of his great glory (Memar II.10).

After what has been said in Part One about the immanence of God, it comes perhaps as a surprise to read this and such assertions, though we attempted to show earlier that there was no real contradiction in terms. At this point, however, we may observe to some extent a conflict between the old and the new, the traditional and the

liberal, the religious code and the philosophical (metaphysical) ideal. No serious attempt seems to have been made by the Samaritans to solve the dilemma. How could God be found by the penitent everywhere, if prayers were efficacious only on Mount Gerizim? The only answer that can be found is by implication, for in many passages throughout the literature, especially from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, we find the thought that Mount Gerizim was only the highest and best of places, where national worship matched up to the demands of the covenant. A man who could not say his prayers there could say prayers that are valid elsewhere, provided the place, like Gerizim, was free of impurity and he himself undefiled in body and mind. Islam allowed for such contingencies, too, and it may well be that Islam helped Samaritanism in this respect, though in early times Judaism had worked out the problems associated with situations where a man could not be in the right place for prayer, and Samaritanism might also have examined these problems in similar manner. It happens that we have no information in early literature that is extant. Markah, however, appears to have been insistent on the sole efficacy of Mount Gerizim, although he, more than any other except Amram Darah, emphasized the immanent nature of God. We must assume, from the available information, that Markah the exegete was not always the philosopher!

Assuming that prayer was specially, but not only, efficacious on the mount, we can appreciate Markah's saying,

How good for him who goes there and seeks God! For he will be answered and will receive all his requests (Memar III.2).

The special efficacy of a holy mountain may, of course, be no more than a belief that has its roots in the past, a left-over from antiquity. In the East, as much as anywhere else, antiquity has its own sanctity. That the development was agonizingly slow in the case of the Samaritans' outlook on Mount Gerizim may be explained simply as due to the methods of their defence mechanism. Mount Gerizim was the chief distinguishing mark of Samaritanism against the Judaists' claims. As long as Mount Zion stood and was believed to be the place of the central shrine of the Israelites, Mount Gerizim's status, too, had to be maintained. Thus at least Passover's continuing observance thereon kept the Samaritan position alive.¹

¹ Though even Passover had to be celebrated 'in town' on occasion, not on Mount Gerizim, witness the existence of a special Passover 'town' service (C. pp. 167f.).

Mount Gerizim is the 'height' (highest spot) of the Samaritan world. As such it is nearest to heaven! It was the first land to be uncovered after the flood in Noah's time. It is to be the central focus of the Taheb's activities in the Second Kingdom. Its real form will present the setting for the hereafter of perfect bliss and purity. In Part Five we shall have to consider the 'other-worldly' aspect of Gerizim's existence. For our purposes here, it is to be noted that Mount Gerizim, Bethel, is essentially pure, that it represents the focal point in the world for prayer and praise. Possession of and worship on this mountain is undoubtedly the means of grace that most strikingly marks out the Samaritans as a unique community in Palestine.

XV

THE GOOD LIFE

If you maintain your high status you will prosper in both worlds.¹

EQUIPPED WITH THE means of grace, divinely or humanly instituted, the Samaritan can go forth in the world and be the good Samaritan. The one thing that links the visible and invisible worlds in any permanent way is the good life. As Mount Gerizim serves as a link between the two worlds in connection with God's dealings with man in history, so the good life links man to God, the physical world of humanity with the celestial world of God. Much of what is said in this chapter has appeared in other forms in different contexts, and the purpose in having a chapter on ethics at this point is that in the circumstances of the Samaritan outlook it is this aspect of human life that leads us from the sinful world of men in darkness to the ideal life of light, this last being the subject of the next part of the book. We shall observe as we proceed that the Samaritans ever linked the good life with the divine favour and hence with the ideal world. At this stage of our study we shall point out the nature of the Samaritan ethic—a subject that has so far been neglected in Samaritan studies—and then consider the chief aspects of the era of divine favour in the lower world. In the last sections of the book we shall have to think of the permanent era of divine favour in the upper world.

The Samaritan ethic differs little in essence from the Pentateuchal. Any difference that exists is not a difference of quality, but rather a difference in the extent of application. As living conditions changed and new social philosophies were examined, thanks to the enlightened aspects of Persian, Greek and Roman rule and of Christianity, new circumstances came under survey from the socio-ethical point of view. On the basis of such chapters of the Law as Lev. 19 and Deut. 27, to mention only two of the chief sources, Samaritan

¹ Memar III.5.

humanitarian enterprise could draft the code of behaviour expected of a people claiming elect status under God in a progressing world. That Christian ethics helped in the process of expansion and introversion is certainly possible, though there is no actual literary evidence that it was only Christian teaching that served as an aid to the development of the Samaritan ethic. Many religious systems and many societies have evolved ethical codes of a similar order. It would seem more reasonable to suppose that Samaritanism benefited, as did Judaism and Christianity, from current thinking and from ideas and ideals that were in the melting-pot of formulation in many parts of the Near East over centuries. The exact form of the ethical code that developed in any one society would be subject to various influences, external and internal alike.

A study of the Samaritan wisdom literature at once reveals something of the nature of the Samaritan code. The first thing to be observed is the mutual interchange of religious and philosophical categories of thought. In the Roman era many of the saws and proverbs illustrate the ethical code of the day, especially those that are exhortatory in form. We shall consult some of Markah's proverbs where they have application, and look also at some of the most typical of the mediaeval as well.

This chapter could have been entitled 'What doth the Lord require?' but since the biblical verse does not occur in the Samaritan Bible it seemed best not to use it. However, the question posed reveals what the Samaritan ethic is; it is what the Lord requires, with the help of philosophical and sociological ideas not directly derived from the Law. Markah's teaching about the acquiring of wisdom serves as a framework for our discussion at the start. The mediaeval didactic writers seem to have continued his teaching without any substantial modification.

Markah has much to say about the wise man as the good man. He assumes, of course, as we do here, that the religious requirements have been met, the means of grace taken advantage of, and that the wise man is one who is pure, as every Samaritan should be, as well as advanced in his social and religious attitudes.

Armed with the benefits derived from the means of grace, the good Samaritan Israelite can add to his spiritual qualifications for entry into the ideal life the gift of wisdom. Some understanding of what was meant by wisdom in the time of the Romans in Palestine can be had from many sources, Roman and otherwise. Confining

ourselves to the Samaritan sources, we gain the following picture of wisdom. Wisdom is a treasure from God; it is the fruit of God's pure light within the perceptive and responding mind. It is a life-giving force that brings power to him who possesses it. Something of the distinctiveness of the Samaritan point of view is gained by comparing it with St Paul's belief about the gifts of the Spirit in I Cor. 12.8f. St Paul placed wisdom at the head of a series of such gifts, followed immediately by knowledge. The Samaritan emphasis is similar, but the detailed descriptions are Neo-Platonic at points.

Of the great treasure which enriches the life of the world let us take our fill, that we may be sustained in the world. Great is the treasure of the True One, all of which is blessings.

Great is the man who is satisfied from it. Wealth—nothing to compare with it—a wealth of wisdom! It is the gateway to the knowledge of the treasure (Memar III.1).

Wisdom is at once a gift of God and a path to God; the man who possesses it is in a state of illumination, and as such he not only broadcasts peace and harmony in the world, but he is closer to God than if he had been possessed only of ritual and other religious rectitude. Every Samaritan who would find God should seek wisdom and enter the pathway that leads to the fullest revelation of God.

It is our duty to be a tree good to behold, crowned with goodly fruits, and to hasten to acquire wisdom and fill our souls with what the True One taught us. It does not behove us to leave ourselves like a waste land which has nothing in it, or like a tree without fruits, for an end has to be made of it.¹ We were created rather to acquire the wisdom of our ancestors, as is fitting (Memar III.1).

Some illustration of what is meant by the wisdom of the ancestors will be given below. It is thus evident that the acquiring of wisdom is part of man's goal in life. It is no luxury; it is an advanced stage on the journey to the ideal life.

One means of grace that helps in this is the Law, for

The book we possess is a book of truth (Memar VI.2).

According to Samaritan exegesis of the Law, God so constituted man that he could advance in spiritual things. Markah's way of expressing it is:

By mighty power God ordered the mind to investigate wisdom, so that what you say . . . may be right (Memar VI.1).

¹ Compare this with the similar thought in Matt. 7.17-19.

In the Day of Atonement Liturgy we have a statement of the part Moses played in acquiring wisdom on man's behalf, containing reference to the treasure of wisdom and to the Logos.

Moses ascended from the citadel of knowledge and went to the city of divine wisdom, where there is a . . . spirit which reveals what is unknown this side of the veil, which brings about what is not founded on mere knowledge, declares that which is not (just) temporal. It (or he) opens a treasure and supplies from the store what is undiminishing. . . . Then he began to take of this and bestow the power in everyone who is what he is by the Word (C. pp. 495-29-496.3).

The nature of wisdom as applied in community life is seen in some of the prohibitions directed at Israel by Moses, as asserted by Markah. No doubt we may take some of Moses' prohibitions and exhortations as really belonging to Markah! Whatever the source, we can perceive how the Samaritans developed their ethical code in the sort of behaviour they condemn—quite apart from such behaviour as is explicitly condemned already in the Law.

Let your heart not lie in your possessions, so as to make you hard!
Do not use your power (wealth) against three classes of poor people,
the person in poverty, the orphan and the widow (Memar III.5).

These and a host of other prohibitions demonstrate the nature of the Samaritan ethic. It is *essentially* the Pentateuchal code of morals, the latest stratum of it, namely that of Deuteronomy. But the Samaritan code is an extension of the ancient code, brought about by the insertion and integration of the ramifications of the teachings of 'Wisdom'. Wisdom means spiritual and moral 'know-how' and is far from being confined to matters of mystical contemplation and reflection on the Law. Wisdom is often considered to have the beauty of simplicity, and in this the Samaritan concept of it is not lacking. Markah clearly believed, as did Ben Manir, Abisha, Abdallah and others much later, that the Samaritans were intended to develop wisdom. They were saved for that purpose, meaning that the elect on the way to the perfect performance of God's will in the world were intended to gain spiritual insight as part of their necessary qualifications. So 'we were not chosen but for knowledge; we were not delivered but for knowledge' in spiritual things (Memar IV.3). It was to be one of the crowning glories of the elect that they were at one in their living with the divine will, hence the golden era of divine favour. Working to do God's will could only be successful if

the higher knowledge was present in the minds of the servants of God.

Knowledge is like the gardens of Crete, containing myrrh and cassia, giving forth pleasant perfumes. Happy is he who works for me in this garden and cultivates it, for its fruits will be his provision (C. p. 758.10-11).

Thus the acquisition of wisdom brings the reward of providential care. It was already explicit in the religious teaching that God cared for and protected his elect, but there was a higher manifestation of providence for 'the higher man'. The Samaritan was not commanded to reach a certain spiritual state and stop there. Every exhortation was made to encourage the unending progression to ever higher states until God was ultimately reached in the incomprehensible unseen mystery. The higher a man reaches in his spiritual awareness, the higher the revelation, the more advanced the inspiration.

It may be asserted that there is innate in the Samaritan Israelite a capacity for applying what had been inherited from the ancestral righteous of the world. As they had passed on, father to son, generation by generation, the quality of righteousness, the pure light manifesting itself in them, so a sort of heritage of righteousness developed. This was not actually the heritage of righteousness, but rather the heritage of the possession of righteousness, maintained through wisdom. So the Samaritan thinker in mediaeval times could think of himself as one whose ethical standards *should* be high because of his inheritance from the righteous of the world. It was inborn in him to seek the state of righteousness. No doubt this is idealistic thinking and rarely put to practice; nevertheless we have here a demonstration of the nature of the ethic at its highest expression. It is also true at the purely religious level that one was expected to be righteous, but the religious level was restricted in the main to matters of belief and ritual. It was in the field of ethics that the responsibility lay for training in and inculcation of the good life. Religion included ethics, as it always does, but it is not difficult for the Samaritan to see some distinction between the two. No doubt the ethic, as a developed code, broke away, as a subject for study and discussion, from the traditional religious topics and came to be thought of as an extension of the religious life. After all, Samaritans like others could disagree on such questions as responsibility in the world, the salvation of men, and so on. Some could argue on the basis of

religious teaching that the elect of God had such a uniquely intimate relationship with him that it was absolutely necessary to refrain from contact with the outside world.¹ Others could argue on humanitarian grounds at the moral level that God desired the salvation of all men and that it was the duty of Israel to be a light unto the Gentiles.

There are evidences in the literature of such discussions; indeed, they are implicit in the teaching of Markah. His advice to the congregation of Israel more often than not connotes the application of discipline.

O congregation, be submissive and start reproving yourselves both outwardly and inwardly with righteousness which is innate in you from good ancestors (Memar III.2).

He speaks from the religious and the moral point of view; these are not identical, though they are closely linked. The discipline of 'inward' reproof involves the control of the senses and the appetite.

If you seek knowledge of the secret of these things (good actions), set your mind where the True One is and forsake the appetite's desire, in which there is no advantage (*ibid.*).

We turn now to the matter of duty and obligation. First, duty to God involves many things we have already discussed, such as belief, trust, study and practice of the Law, use of the means of grace, and so on. Markah, however, gives us a most excellent statement about what God requires of men:

You are not expected to do something that it is not in your power to do, but God wants you now to love your Lord with all your power, and not to love evil. If it is not in you to do so, God will not demand it of you (Memar III.9).

The latter part of this statement is somewhat bewildering in view of many other things that are said about duty to God. It is possible that Markah went further here than most later Samaritans would like, and they do not seem to have repeated this thought of his. At the traditional religious level almost every Samaritan would admit that if a man could not attain to love of God, he had no chance of salvation and eternal bliss. Perhaps Markah's philosophical concern outweighed his religious one at this point, so that we should not take

¹ For example, the High Priest only left Mount Gerizim if he was compelled to.

it too seriously or regard it as representative, but yet it was a Samaritan who made the remark, and we are left wondering whether it should be taken literally or simply as a matter of principle that no man is expected to do more than his best. If we take this latter view, then there is no problem. On the other hand, it is barely possible that when love is the matter involved no pressure is upon the Israelite at all, but that God *encourages* him to love him and no more than that. The emphasis is usually on man's duty to be submissive to God, in the sense that he should be filled with the fear of God and of the wonder of his being. The moralist explains this further as involving self-discipline. Markah elsewhere emphasizes that

It is Israel's duty to perform all its service with humility (Memar III.4),

and this is precisely the kind of service demanded in the Old Testament.

Simple trust in God is an important element in man's duty to God. It is closely associated with the attitude of submission. But simplicity of trust and submissiveness in service are not the only attitudes to be adopted by those who would please God. Over and over again the Samaritan is urged to understand his will for him, as far as that is possible. He is obliged to understand the significance of God's intervention in history and to contemplate the providential care of the Lord for his elect. Markah tells his readers to study the statements of the Law. The reader should try to understand that the glory of God is the end of all action in the world. As God blessed the forefathers and they expressed their gratitude, so all their descendants should continually thank God for past as well as present benefits.

God wanted Jacob's descendants to multiply thanksgiving for what he had given them. Therefore it is our duty to know the inner (real) meaning of this action, that we should join those who already know the glory of God and give thanks (Memar III.4).

In many respects what man's duty to society is really amounts to his duty to God, but it is possible and proper to consider man's duty in its various fields of application, albeit these fields are but levels of the one manifestation of living experience. The following brief summary from the teaching of Markah, and almost all later writers in this sphere, well illustrates the nature of duty towards one's neighbour.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Basing his main body of ethical teaching on Deut. 27, Markah lists the following categories of proper behaviour. First of our selections is one's duty to the 'blind' man, by which is meant any man who is spiritually, mentally or physically blind. Markah stresses the first and second, the stress in Deut. 27.18 being on the last and therefore taken for granted. Anyone who enquires about truth must be answered; anyone desiring knowledge is to receive it; a man who errs is not to be left to his error; a man guilty of some action but not aware of the enormity of it is to be guided back to right action; a man rushing precipitously into evil must be restrained; anyone making statements that are harmful, but which he did not really understand, is to be taught the truth of them; anyone making claims for knowledge which are unfounded is to be acquainted with the truth.

Desertion of anyone who is unconsciously walking in evil makes those who abandon him responsible for his continued unhappy state. A man is his brother's keeper. His refusal to accept advice, however, relieves others of that responsibility.

In another section Markah voices the belief that evil is not to be resisted (cf. Matt. 5.39); such as thieves are not to be shunned, so that they are left to multiply their malpractice. It is the Samaritan's duty to approach them and correct their behaviour if possible. Anyone tempted to follow the advocates of superstition (false worship) should be 'taken by the hand and led to the True One'.

Commenting on Deut. 27.19, which deals with duty to the stranger and the sojourner, Markah teaches his readers as follows: the sojourner is not to be harmed by word or action, lest he regret coming to dwell among the elect; he is to be given every opportunity to acquire knowledge from the elect, i.e. from the Law. The fatherless person is to be allowed the comfort of society and given every help in the acquiring of spiritual knowledge.

On Deut. 27.20, dealing with sexual offences, Markah expounds the dangers inherent in all sorts of sexual aberration. He obviously accepted the conviction expressed in the Sermon on the Mount that looking lustfully at a woman is as bad as actually having acted adulterously. Sexual aberration results in violating the Law, corrupting the species, causing the downfall of the soul, and rebellion against God's will.

The 'Good Samaritan' of the New Testament parable (Luke 10) steps forth out of Markah's words:

It is not right for any priest or judge to pass the sojourner by, but they are to manifest the truth, as your Lord commanded you.

Every man is expected to know his place and keep it. It is when a man seeks a position beyond his rightful one that sin increases and he loses what station he once had. Stress is laid on the need for doing one's duty in one's own sphere. Every man must give rightful place to the various superior classes of priest, elder, sage. It is certain that Markah believed that everyone's status was a state appropriate to his level of life, corresponding to the light within him. No one could successfully miss a rung of the ladder of progress as he climbs, for he is only prepared for the rung to which his mind's awareness has taken him.

We turn briefly to duty toward oneself in order to complete the sketch. If we recapitulate for a moment, we recall various obligations on every man, obligations of a spiritual nature, duties of a mental and physical order. Man is expected, as an individual, to allow the pure light to illumine him, to let his mind develop by prayer and contemplation of God, of his works, of his actions in history, his revelation in the Law, in Moses, his promises and blessings to the righteous. He is also called upon to exercise restraint in the things of the lower world; therefore fasting, sexual abstinence, and other forms of discipline are regarded as meritorious acts in that they lead a man away from dependence on worldly things to dependence on spiritual things. If a man depends on material things and standards, he becomes unstable and unreliable in the community of the elect. He will respond to duty only in so far as his own benefit is involved. No one can rely on him, and he becomes a burden on the community. He lives by his own successes and failures; he is up one day and down the next. Generally he will seek pleasure to the exclusion of all else and he is liable to lose the way in his anxiety for the things of the morrow. He is the type who is content to be 'merry today, for tomorrow we die'.

He who is pleased with his foolish self . . . is like a straying beast and as the blind man groping about in the dark (C. p. 745.22f.).

In keeping with the golden mean of philosophy is the exhortation to keep to the middle of the way, i.e. to avoid extremes of all kinds;

The ways of life are good to those who tread in the middle of them (C. p. 506.11).

Security in life comes from the wisdom that leads a man in the sure way. A man who has special responsibilities over the people is urged to exercise foresight and restraint, lest they follow him into error and perish. Particular attention is directed at the elder, whose wisdom and experience should be as a foundation for every individual. A man should be able to turn to the elder in everyday life and receive guidance, just as he should be able to rely on the priest in matters of faith and religion. An elder who does not supply himself with right knowledge is useless to society; thus

A wise child is of more value than an ignorant elder (Memar III.10).

As far as other classes of leaders are concerned, the advice to them is simply that of Moses in his last speeches before ascending Mount Nebo, and the biblical statements are reproduced with little addition.

But there is more than duty to one's own society and to one's self—and of course one's parents, as taught in the Law. The cosmic nature of Samaritan thinking about God and the world and about history inevitably involves the elect in the duty to other nations. Every Samaritan represents the elect and is duty-bound to express the will of God wherever he may be. The New Testament parable of the Good Samaritan would have been acceptable to the Samaritans of Jesus' day, for it well expresses the duty of the Samaritan towards his Gentile or Judaist neighbour. This duty is not peculiar to the Samaritan, of course, for the Judaist, Christian and Muslim alike are involved in such responsibility, but we speak only of the Samaritan here.

It is good for us to purify our heart and know the truth and fill our heart with the instruction of knowledge, and then teach the nations. Thus our Lord has taught us that we possess light that illumines the world (Memar VI.2).

The Samaritan Israelite must be possessed of wisdom if he is to represent God in the world, and so

Praise be to the Illuminator who fills the wise with the spirit of wisdom, so that they are like lamps shining in the world and dispelling the dark (Memar VI.7).

Markah would have agreed wholeheartedly (except for the description of God as Father) with the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5.14, 16):

You are light for all the world. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellows, so that, when they see the good you do, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.

One further example, expressed at the 'wisdom' level, will suffice to show the Samaritans' belief in their mission to the world—their ultimate duty to God as his elect.

May he open his treasure for you, and grant you . . . a spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge, for you and your sons, that the nations may say, 'A wise and understanding people!'

The impression must not be gained that the ethic of the Samaritan religion is unique. They derived their moral teaching from the Pentateuch, a book that forms part of the Bible of at least two other major religions. The Samaritans, however, differ in one respect. They were not scattered throughout the world to nearly the same extent as the Judaists, Christians and Muslims, those other 'peoples of the book' as the Koran puts it. They were bound to be immersed in their own affairs, specially versed in their own history and traditions. As a result they tend to employ the argument from history for every branch of learning, finding their models for evil and good in men of the past. Part of the system of teaching the good life to the young lies in the appeal to history, and we briefly note the personages who most deserved approbation in the eyes of the Samaritan moralist. We have seen something of the purely religious approach in that such men as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Eleazar, Ithamar, Phinehas, Joshua, etc., obeyed or trusted God. From the 'wisdom' point of view, which is often integrated into the religious and rightly so, the possession of wisdom was manifest in the actions of some past figures, such as the pristine Adam, Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Eleazar, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb and so on—thus Markah's list in his chapter on the use of wisdom (VI.2). It is clear from the rewards mentioned in connection with each of these that they are the results of sound judgement rather than mere obedience to the revealed commandments. In the case of some of these persons the Law was not available! It was not revealed until the time of Moses.

Further advice from Markah on this subject reveals the nature of the reward of the good life.

Make your deed to be fixed to righteousness and you will be magnified with two good things: the success of your undertaking and the success of the righteous (Memar III.9).

This statement reveals two essential features of Samaritan thinking about the result of good living; one is the material success of the wise action and the other the proved outcome as witnessed in the patriarchal blessings of history. We shall discuss this more fully in a technical connection below, but let us note that in many passages there is a third feature of this thinking, namely that the good life brings happy repercussions in the hereafter.

Establish yourselves in the truth, for the gate of God is opened and truth is revealed. Enter in peace, for the treasure of life is before you. Come and be supplied, lest you depart from the world devoid of knowledge and stand naked (Memar III.10).

These three features in the Samaritan belief about the consequences of right action will occupy our attention further as we move gradually from the scene of the visible world to the arena of the invisible realm. Before we do so, it is necessary to say a word about perfection, in addition to what has been stated before. The Samaritans observe the created works of God as in a state of perfection. They also regard his teaching through Moses as perfect as it comes direct from God. In this kind of perfection there is no question of the attainment of full growth as in St Paul's teachings. It seems impossible to be perfect 'even as our Father in heaven is perfect', and yet that is demanded of the Christian according to New Testament teaching (Matt. 5.48). It is at this point that the demand for rebirth, for a change of heart, is made in Christianity. By rebirth or change comes a new essence, an essence impossible of attainment by growth towards it. The Samaritans seem to have taught this, too. They knew that God was perfect, but they could not consider him to have *reached* perfection. He is perfect by nature, in essence, and could not be anything else. The demand for perfection is muted, apparently, as much as possible, but nevertheless the state of perfection is demanded, albeit progress towards spiritual advancement is inculcated. It is admitted that growth toward total wisdom, total purity, total humility, is necessary in order that the man of wisdom, purity, humility, may be reborn.

Certain it is that a man who is perfect in his nature would manifest his inner state in his words (Memar IV.1). Markah also informs us that

God taught the elders through Moses, so that they were perfect.

By this he seems to mean that they reflected the cosmic nature of Moses the Word (Logos), the perfect state of the Man of God.

Apparently the state of perfection, so unlike any other state, can be communicated by the highest medium of revelation. Clearly not all who receive the revelation will react by some dynamic change in their state, by total conversion; some will only attain this state after long and gradual progression toward belief. Some, however, will experience the supreme transformation and from being men of sin they will be changed to men of perfection. This is no doubt idealistic thinking, but we can see the parallel to the Christian teaching about conversion, gradual or by rapid transformation. When we speak of transformation to perfection, we can hear the oft-repeated injunction of the Law: 'Return to God', which means going back to one's original (in the pristine Adam) state. Perfection in man, then, means a return to his God-intended state of being.

Final confirmation on the subject of perfection may be received from Markah's exhortation:

Turn back to the True One, for you are the children of the perfect ones (Memar IV.9).

We may at this stage in our enquiry regard perfection as the essence of the ideal state and hence those who are to live in the ideal world must be perfect.

THE DIVINE FAVOUR IN THE WORLD

The second stage of our study of the good life deals with the outcome of it in this world. At this point we not only observe the material benefits of the good life, briefly introduced earlier, but we have a foretaste of the nature of the ideal life in the ideal world of the hereafter, so that this section serves as an introduction to the teaching about the hereafter.

We remind ourselves that the Samaritans believe in an era of divine favour which existed in the lifetime of Moses and was brought to an end because of the defection of Eli. They believe in a future era of divine favour, *in the world*, to be initiated by the restoring mission of the Taheb. This idea of divine favour is inherent in much that the writers say about the reward for the good life bestowed on those still in the world. It was a basic feature of the Samaritan outlook that good action brings good reward. They felt, as the majority of people do, that the good should benefit while still in the world and that the evil should receive their recompense while they are yet on earth.

Partly based on wishful thinking and partly on the patriarchal

blessings, the picture of divine favour built up century by century. In the Roman period all the essential features of belief in divine favour as expressed at the practical level had been formed, so that the picture deriving from mediaeval writings is but a more colourful reproduction of the earlier.

It is important to differentiate between divine favour as a matter of principle and *the divine favour*, or era of divine favour, as a more concrete expectation. The latter does not come in for discussion here, but belongs to eschatological expectations and will be dealt with in the next part of the book. The setting here is of reward *in the world* for a people living in the world.

We may conveniently divide these expectations into three elements, physical, religious, and social. By 'religious' is meant reference to such things as sanctuary, prayer, priests. Belief in a reward of purely physical or material kind seems to be the result primarily of wishful thinking. As an outcome of centuries of severe repression and persecution, many writers express their hopes for a better world in terms of the absence of oppression.

Markah as ever is our earliest datable authority, and from one of his most loved Defter Hymns comes a passage which reveals the physical nature of the rewards expected for the good life.

It is the turning away of thy face that has made all this severe affliction to be a cause of accursedness in every place; the fruit of the womb is withheld, the produce of the soil damaged, the mouth of judgement opened against us, engulfing young and old alike (C. p. 14.15f.).

The reference to the withholding of the fruit of the womb is one that is found in many forms from all periods of the literature. The Samaritans number between two and three hundred today, whereas they existed in large numbers in the time of Christ, but even as early as Markah's time the authorities were conscious of and anxious about the decline in the population. In scores of poems from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century one of the wishes most frequently voiced by priest or High Priest was that the numbers of the people might increase—in accordance with the promise of God to each of the righteous three.

The reference to the mouth of judgement being opened against the Samaritans reflects historical circumstances, for they were constantly being treated as outsiders in the community of the overlord, a minority whose rights could be waived. As a result of such treatment at the hands of the authorities, Roman, Arab, Turkish in

particular, they were not infrequently prevented from entering their sanctuary on Mount Gerizim and from doing many of the things necessary for the right performance of the Pentateuchal laws.

Another picture of persecution in Markah's time comes in the Memar and we can see how wishes for the future would involve purely physical things.

How long will dwellings be devoid of inhabitants, how long vineyards planted without having any exchange value? How long will your cattle be slaughtered and all your beasts plundered by your enemies before your eyes? (VI.6).

Markah goes on to blame the evildoing of the Samaritans for these unhappy circumstances, and elsewhere he teaches that only the good life can bring the happy conditions of fruitful fields, increasing population, peace and plenty.

At the religious level great sorrow is often expressed at the absence of the proper conducting of the ritual and purification rites. Many compositions written on this theme, and particularly on the absence of priests from the sanctuary, may include a great deal of exaggeration, but some clearly reflect historical circumstances. Again Markah's picture is an excellent and typical example of literature on this theme. Blaming the apostate for the sorrows of his day, he says:

They destroy the sanctuary and put a stop to all that is done in it, so that the world is without a sanctuary, altar, oblation, burnt-offering, peace-offerings, cereal-offering, sin-offering, incense, prayer, priest—all this because of the apostate! (IV.5).

The Liturgy contains scores of such passages; the Samaritans were acutely conscious of their reduced state. They could not understand why the elect nation should suffer for so long, and they concluded that it must be that despite all the precautions taken the nation was yet impure. They found warrant for their explanation in Deut. 28.62 and Lev. 26.17, where some warning of what would happen to those who do not obey the laws was given. Persecution in general, in whatever century and from whatever nation, was usually explained as the fulfilment of the threat of Deut. 28.49f.

Although blaming the Samaritans themselves, Markah elsewhere indicates that the worst affliction is the loss of priests, so that certain parts of the religious system, essential parts like the Day of Atonement, cannot be carried out, with the result that the people are left in imminent danger.

It is possible that Markah reflects the anguish resulting from the harsh persecution by Antiochus IV in the second century BC (II Macc. 6.2), when he speaks of places for evil practices being set up (cf. Mark 13.14), and women immersed in uncleanness. Sacrilege, desecration of the holy sanctuary on Mount Gerizim, was the worst of all, and in the Samaritan chronicles we read of the intense bitterness and hatred engendered in the Samaritans by the terrible doings of Antiochus IV and of other later rulers, notably Hadrian.

At the social level, however, they are equally anguished, and anxious that divine favour will put an end to spiritual sorrows. Amongst these sorrows is the existence of impropriety, abominable practices alien to the Samaritan religion, children badly brought up, fathers far from perfect. These social and family evils are often the subject of poems of intense contrition and in many passages on the subject of divine favour it is the rectifying of these things that calls for most urgent petition.

In the mediaeval period as a whole it is the eschatological aspect of divine favour that is most emphasized. Perhaps by then, a thousand years after Markah and the reformation of the religious system under Baba Rabba, the Samaritans had learned to look, like the Christians, chiliastically at their future. Gone were the days when one could honestly expect good crops, more children, peace and safety! It had become inbred in the Samaritan by the Middle Ages to expect trouble, and hence so many of their writings on the subject of the divine favour call for things not quite of this world. This we must examine in Part Four.

As far as short-term hopes are concerned, the Samaritan like anyone else wanted peace and plenty, but they had more reason than most to expect these, because they depended on the promise that the blessings on the Patriarchs would be efficacious in the lives of their descendants. Yet we must sum up the Samaritan hope for the future by saying that as time went on the expectation became increasingly eschatological. It became more and more obvious that it was not this world but the next that would provide them with what they believed they had deserved. It was then and not now that the blessings to their ancestors would be fulfilled.

SALVATION

There is another aspect of divine favour which appears to require separate treatment, that of salvation. Some aspects of it have already

been dealt with in other contexts: there is the salvation wrought in the individual man through his inherent wisdom; there is the salvation created by the innate pure light as it reaches maximum radiance in the life of a man; there is the national salvation, whereby the Israelites were historically saved from extinction; there is also the salvation wrought by God amongst all those Israelites of the higher 'awareness', i.e. amongst those who had taken advantage of all the means of grace, who maintained themselves in purity and obedience. It will be convenient here, however, before turning to matters of eschatology and the ideal world, to set out briefly the Samaritan attitude to the subject as a whole.

No repetition of what has already been written about the salvation brought about in the man of wisdom, the man of light, is needed, and we may confine our attention to what may be termed 'official thinking' about salvation. In principle and in all essential factors salvation to the Samaritans meant practically the same thing as it did to the Judaists. In detail and in expressed interpretation there are considerable difficulties, but these are matters for specialist study and do not concern us here.

The Samaritans speak of salvation rather than redemption. There is no idea whatsoever of God 'redeeming' Israel, and in this we have the greatest single point of difference between the Samaritan and the Judaist (and Christian) attitudes. There is no conception of an antithesis of God and devil, no teaching about God 'rescuing' or 'buying back' his elect from the grasp of a Satan. The Samaritans have none of this and seem not to have derived any such notions from Judaism or Christianity. To some extent Samaritanism matches up to Islam rather than to any other religious system. Salvation is a fact and a promise, the former based on the record of history, the latter based on the promises written into the Law. Israel was saved and will be saved. The historical evidence of Israel's deliverance from the Egyptians and from many other enemies as they sought to settle in the land of promise, Canaan, proves to the Samaritan Israelite that Israel has been saved time and time again. The chief act of deliverance was under Moses and everything else stemmed from that supreme manifestation of God's saving intentions for Israel. Moses stood between Israel and God. He offered to make atonement for his people (Ex. 32.30-32) and won for them God's favour.

Understandably there has been a great deal written about the past act of salvation, much study has been devoted to it in detail, and

considerable effort made to understand the events of the past in terms of the future. As a result of such studies it became clear to the exegete that Israel's salvation was a part of a universal whole, but before we say more of this let us note three elements that are necessary to salvation. According to the Defer (e.g. C. p. 58), these three essential factors are (a) the Law; (b) the covenant; (c) the Taheb. Study and contemplation of the Law brings inspiration to men and therefore saves them from potential sin. The covenant stands as a permanent promise of God to his elect; maintaining the covenant by national purity and obedience gives strength to the bond between God and his people. The Taheb will come to bring final and irrevocable salvation to Israel for all time.

But it is within the cosmic context that one sees Samaritan understanding of salvation at its best. This teaching is simply that God has always intended his chosen ones to be secure from all harm, for he has his purposes to work out in them. Markah set the pattern for future studies on this theme by starting his chain of the delivered right back in the dawn of history and not at the Burning Bush. In his long account of the call of Moses he expands Ex. 3.6 as follows: God delivered Noah from the flood and made him the progenitor of a new race. He rescued Abraham and made him the progenitor of the elect nation. He delivered Isaac from death through sacrifice and made him wondrous promises. Jacob he saved from Esau and Joseph he rescued so that he would be enabled to provide security for Israel in Egypt. Moses was saved from death in the Nile, and as a result of this preservation all Israel thereafter were maintained in safety for the performance of God's commands and the carrying-out of his revealed word (Memar I.2).

This is the beginning of a cosmic interpretation of salvation. On this view salvation has its roots in the long-distant past of antiquity, in the time of the new dispensation at the time of Noah, the father of the Semites; it received its specific application in the time of Abraham, the father of the Hebrew branch of the Semites, and finally was consummated in the life of Moses, the founder of the Israelite people, the teacher and saviour of the elect of God. Markah thus finds it natural to see in the first great deliverance a cosmic significance. God 'manipulated' the elements in order to save Israel.¹ No task was too great; even the supernatural could be employed in the

¹ For a Judaist view that God interfered with the natural order for the purpose of saving Israel, see Ex. Rabba 38.4, Eccles. Rabba 3.4.1.

service of salvation. Markah's interpretation of the miracles wrought by Moses is based on the Pentateuchal account, of course, but it is greatly extended and deepened in the light of more progressive thinking, thinking applied to world rather than nation, to nation rather than tribe.

The elements of the world number four. They served the congregation of the Lord (Memar II.3).

Markah expounds in detail the way in which God put the physical elements to service. So fire three times issued forth from the unseen world, wind ten times served the favoured tribes and thwarted their enemies, water fourteen times served them until they reached the Desert of Shur, and earth six times saved Israel. These thirty-three manifestations are described in the Memar II.3, where every possible hint of help from the elements in the Pentateuchal story has been scrutinized and applied in the argument.

Thus Israel is given a fundamental place in the scheme of things. Even the elements become subservient to the cause of their deliverance. In the Samaritan angelology, too, the angels are placed at every great event; so they were present in Israel's journey from Egypt, giving aid; so they were present at every dramatic moment in the formation of the elect people out of a number of independent tribes. The cosmic signification of angelic appearances will be noted later; here it is enough to observe that the physical elements and the angels of heaven ('powers and heavenly hosts') are brought into the teaching about salvation. Both worlds meet for that great event. The repercussions are cosmic in import; God's plan of salvation is not confined to a group of tribes in a small tract of territory. The whole world of mankind benefits from the salvation of the 'light of their life'. Despite the emphasis on the national and universal salvation writers do not lose sight of the individual application of the soteriological scheme. In our categories previously mentioned there is the consideration that the individual can obtain salvation because of the right application of the means of grace, but even in the traditionally couched religious terminology we find the principle of salvation in the national and universalist sense being applied to the individual Israelite. So the petitioner can address God as Saviour and Immanent One, one who is in no place but is everywhere, one who is never absent from the truly contrite heart, but is to be found wherever the righteous seek him.

A near deliverer is he to those who seek him, him who is the Saviour of our fathers from the power of their enemies (C. p. 27.17).¹

It became usual to regard the 'Saviour of our fathers' as the Saviour of the individual, though never in the full sense of a personal saviour. This Christian-like stress only applies in Samaritan thought of very late times to Moses, also the saviour of Israel. The Samaritans in the main preferred to apply the attributes of Saviour to God himself. Anyone who was pure, obedient, sincere in petition, could be assured of God's *favour* in his life and could be certain that he was one of the delivered. Not every Samaritan could cling to that hope, but the 'righteous of the people' individually and in a corporate sense were equipped to receive salvation. The means of grace, taken advantage of in the proper manner, assured men of salvation. In a sense, the righteous individual became a microcosm of the true Israel, and the terminology of salvation could be applied equally to nation and individual.

This personal salvation was usually expressed in traditional religious terminology mixed with 'Wisdom' teaching, so that our categories find themselves in two main divisions, corporate and individual. At the latter level self-salvation is a belief that loomed large, while at the former the cosmic purpose behind the creation and salvation of the elect is the ultimate aim of God's will. It is evident that Samaritanism has gone its own way in this teaching; there were no prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, as in Judaism and Christianity, to develop a line of teaching that the salvation of Israel was the be-all and end-all of God's purposes. Samaritanism had one prophet, a Christ-like figure in doctrinal terms, whose teaching was interpreted in terms of the cosmos, not of Israel. The Samaritans went beyond the traditional religious ideologies of earlier times and were successful in expounding them in the search for ever broader notions of God and the world. Today Samaritanism does not think of itself as a vehicle for the salvation of the world, but at its best it saw in itself God's chosen vessel for the nations to drink of the grace and mercy of God.

¹ See Cowley's footnote 9.

PART FOUR

ESCHATOLOGY

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE SUBJECT OF the future restoration of the community of God and the Day of Resurrection and the Day of Vengeance and Recompense occupied the attention of the Samaritans more than any other. Throughout the vast majority of their writings the hope for the future in eschatological terms receives considerable attention. In this regard the Samaritans developed their own ideology. It is true that many details of the picture painted in their writings are common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam as well, but it does not seem that the Samaritans were actually dependent on any of their neighbours for these. It is best to assess these details as 'floating traditions' current throughout the Near East for several centuries before Christ and persisting as late as the advent of Islam. We could compare many aspects of the Samaritan eschatological concepts with this or the other religious literature and find remarkably close parallels, particularly when we compare the Samaritan beliefs with the Old Testament apocryphal writings, the New Testament eschatological passages, the later writings of Rabbinic Judaism, and the traditions of Islam based on Koranic passages that are themselves decidedly close to some New Testament passages.

From the current ideas about Messiah, Resurrection, Day of Judgement, Heaven and Hell, all the Near Eastern religions derived much, not by any deliberate act of selection, but by inheritance. Such ideas are, in the main, thoughts that were circulating in the Near East for very many centuries, but we shall find that, as we have noted in other connections, the Samaritans in the course of their ideological evolution not only inherited many eschatological notions; they 'fitted them in' to their own cosmic scheme of salvation, of reward and of punishment. There are features of Samaritanism here, such as its doctrine of the eternal mount, of angels, of the Taheb, and so on, which mark it off distinctively. We shall note only the most obvious parallels to the ideas of other religions, and confine ourselves in the main to the presentation of the broad outline of the Samaritan eschatology, leaving it to speak for itself. The reader who is interested especially in the topics of these chapters may turn to any standard

work on eschatology in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, for comparative study in more detail.

We begin as promised with some observations on the subject of 'between the two worlds'; here we find one of the notable Samaritan differentia. At this point we recall the teaching that the two worlds are one, that Moses is the prophet of both worlds, that the invisible world is the real as distinct from the visible, the unreal, world, the former containing the true and ultimate models of all that is in the visible. Plato's doctrine of the real and the unreal may have been the original source *via* Neo-Platonism, but nevertheless the concept of, say, Mount Gerizim being in both worlds is a point of application of the doctrine peculiar to the Samaritan system of belief. As we have so often had occasion to point out, the Samaritans were able to develop their ideas provided there was some biblical warrant for the germ of the idea. In the specific case quoted that warrant was the biblical 'This is the gate of heaven' (Gen. 28.17).

When we turn to any aspect of the field of eschatology, we at once find a biblical warrant. The development from that warrant (sometimes the warrant is selected after the development!) has been like a river moving crookedly through a dense forest, but the river keeps on moving from its source *in the mountain* and eventually spreads out after its journey through the jungle until it moves tranquilly along to a large lake, which becomes as it were a reservoir from which one may drink to satisfaction. This is an analogy of Samaritan ideology, especially in the field of eschatological hopes; the result is a tranquil state, from which the generations benefited.

XVI

THE SECOND KINGDOM

*He will remove wrath from Israel. God will . . . overcome the world victoriously.*¹

THE PERIOD OF divine favour *on earth*, to which we have had occasion to refer, is frequently called the Second Kingdom. Considerable misunderstanding has arisen in the past because of the failure of students of Samaritanism to realize that the Samaritans believe in a period of new rule, of divine favour *on earth*, and in addition an everlasting period of ideal life in the 'upper world'. The distinction between these two concepts must be strictly observed if one is to understand how the Samaritans developed their eschatological ideas. On the one hand they inherited, like the Judaists, Christians and Muslims, all sorts of eschatological notions from the past. On the other hand, they found it possible to develop thoughts about the heavenly world, which were by no means common in the centuries before Christ.

In order to maintain our division between the two eras, we discuss here the first as part of our scheme to distinguish the 'interworld' era, an era associated with Mount Gerizim and the restoration of worship thereon. This era is the era of the Taheb, about whom we shall have more to say below; it is the period of restoration prior to the great world cataclysm that will herald the Day of Judgement. Expectation of the Second Kingdom has lasted from Roman times at least, judging from the available literature, and no doubt since long before then. Many are the prayers to be found in the Liturgy that reflect this hope.

May God prolong your lives till the days of the Taheb, the Tabernacle (restored) and the days of favour (C. p. 363.27).

The origins of the Samaritan eschatology are by no means known with certainty, but M. Gaster went a long way towards solving the

¹ C. p. 45.15-16.

question in his *Samaritan Oral Law and Ancient Traditions*. In his introduction to that work he showed with fair certainty that the Samaritan form of eschatology 'fits in exactly with the period between the return from the Exile and the Maccabees'.

The Samaritan ideas about divine disfavour and divine favour as periods of time are found in non-Samaritan literature of an early period, too. For example, in Isa. 61.2 we have reference to the 'year of favour' and the 'day of vengeance'. In the Dead Sea literature there are several references of this kind. In the *Zadokite Document* (1.5) and in the *Hymns of Thanksgiving* (3.28) there is reference to the era of wrath.¹ The 'era of favour' is also mentioned in the *Hymns* (e.g. 15.15). Likewise in the Liturgy of Karaite Judaism the periods of divine disfavour and divine favour are mentioned frequently. Scattered throughout the literature of Judaism are references to the same subject. Of all these literatures it is the Samaritan that reveals by far the most developed and systematic eschatological doctrine.²

Our sources for the eschatological studies that follow are chiefly Chronicle I (The Asatir), Markah's Memar, the Defter, the mediaeval poems in the Festivals Liturgy and the Treatise on the subject by Ghazal ad-Duwaik, most of which have not hitherto been employed to the full in the examination of this subject. Gaster built up his eschatological picture from various works and quoted them extensively in his *Oral Law*. These sources are all mediaeval and he has not taken into account the much earlier sources now available. Our study, therefore, begins with the earliest material and includes the additions made in later times (the times of Gaster's sources, the Tabbakh, the Birth of Moses, [Moled Mosheh], Shira Yatima, Yom ad-Din, the Hillukh, the Malef, and a few sources of less importance).

The Samaritan belief that there was to be a period of divine favour, a Second Kingdom (the first having been from Joshua to Anitel³) to come, is probably derived in the first instance from Deut. 18.18, which contains the promise:

I will raise up for them a prophet like you (Moses) from among their brethren.

¹ Also the 'era of wickedness' in *Zadokite Document* 6.10, 14; 12.23, etc.

² For other influences on Samaritan thought in relation to this whole subject, see further the writer's article, 'The Samaritans under the Patronage of Islam', *Islamic Studies* 1.2, 1962, pp. 91-110; also his article, 'The Day of Judgement in Near Eastern Religions', *Indo-Iranica* 14.4, 1961, pp. 33-53.

³ The predecessor of Samson as a 'judge' over Israel, according to Chronicle II and its successors.

Deut. 32.25 ('Vengeance is mine . . .') is a proof passage for the belief in a Day of Vengeance (cf. also vv. 41f.). We have already noted how Moses and the Taheb became associated and finally identified, so that the Taheb is really *Moses redivivus*.

It seems more than likely that in the period in Palestine between the return from exile and New Testament times there was considerable and industrious scholastic study of the Law by Samaritans and Judaists alike. Out of these generations of study and discussion the generations which gave birth to the already conceived ideas of 'one who is to come', 'Messiah', and so on, must have developed such ideas as found in the early Christian centuries; e.g. in John 4.25, where the Samaritans believed, we are told, in a 'Messiah'—though 'Messiah' is hardly the right term in the Samaritan case, for their concept of the 'one who is to come' is not quite like that of Judaism and Christianity. Their 'coming one' is only a restorer and not an anointed figure of some royal house, indeed a figure who would appear like a comet in the sky and then quickly disappear, his work of a few years done.

It is not surprising, then, that Markah's Memar and the Defter should contain many references to eschatological beliefs. Three centuries earlier, to our knowledge, these beliefs had already been held, and who knows how long before the time of St John's Gospel? Further evidence of Samaritan eschatological beliefs in early Christian times comes from the appearance of the Samaritan Simon Magus. According to Jerome¹ Simon claimed to be the 'Word of God' (as Moses was!). Philip the Evangelist of Samaria found Simon to have won a following among the Samaritan people. According to another source² Pontius Pilate lost his office in Palestine because of the savage way in which he quelled a riot in Samaria, which arose as the result of one claiming to be the expected 'Messiah'. Thomson reports³ (quoting Montgomery) that Petermann, who visited the Samaritans in Nablus in 1860, heard from them that they were expecting the Taheb in five years' time. Such beliefs well illustrate how important to the Samaritans, even in modern times, is the expectation of the Taheb and the Second Kingdom.

The period of his coming is generally reckoned as at the beginning

¹ In his Commentary on Matt. 24.

² Josephus, *Antiquities* xviii.4. In the second century Justin Martyr of Samaria (I *Apology* 53) referred to the belief.

³ *The Samaritans*, etc., p. 196. He tells also of Mills' visit to the Samaritans in 1860, when they had postponed the Taheb's coming till 1910.

of the seventh millennium from creation, and thus it may be due at any time in the twentieth century! The fullest discussion of the biblical warrant for the belief in the Second Kingdom is to be found in Ghazal ad-Duwaik's Commentary, but we shall base our findings on the earliest material available and see how the same beliefs have persisted right through mediaeval times till the present. The additions made in the mediaeval era will be noted.

THE TAHEB

How will the Second Kingdom be? What will happen then? Will all the divine promises be fulfilled? These and many other questions of that sort will be answered in terms of the expectations about the Taheb.

The evidence suggests that in earliest times the Taheb was to be the restorer and no more. His function was to bring victory to the elect in the world, and there was no suggestion that he was to have anything to do with the Day of Vengeance and what follows. It is understandable that the main hope about the Taheb was that he should, like the Davidic Messiah of Judaism, make an end of persecution and bring military victory to Israel. However, the Samaritan concept of the divine favour, derived from other parts of the Law, was a concept that probably ran parallel to that of the Taheb for a long time, and eventually the two became integrated, with the result that the Taheb came to be the restorer of the true worship, himself a priest—after the fashion of Moses. The Second Kingdom thus became in the expectation of the Samaritans a theocracy; no king was looked for and no royal prerogatives. They had seen enough of kings and courts with their concomitant corruption and amassed wealth. It was priesthood, not kingship, that was expected to be the sovereign force in the new kingdom.

Markah sees in the Taheb one 'who was to come in the fullness of time', after a long succession of generations. Speaking of the people of the Lord (whom he calls Jacob here), he writes:

Jacob, a descendant himself and yet a chief root, descendants from fathers to sons, right from Noah the origin to the Taheb his descendant (Memar IV.12).

Noah was the progenitor of 'the new man' and as such was the Second Adam according to some; Jacob is the father of the Israelites. Thus Markah places the Taheb at the end of a line of succession from the progenitor of the new human race (after the flood) through the

progenitor of Israel. The Taheb's place is thus at the consummation stage of history.

The Taheb, we have said, is *Moses redivivus*, and as such had to be of the tribe of Levi. Abisha clearly believed in this and actually called him the fourth from Levi, as if speaking of Moses himself (C. p. 496).

Markah identified the Taheb with Moses:

The great prophet Moses . . . spoke concerning Israel words of blessing. . . . He *will come* . . . and seek out their enemy and deliver Israel (Memar III.3).

Abisha (C. p. 514) related the two personages in a variety of ways; perhaps he went too far at times in speaking of the Taheb as though he were to be Moses returned in all his former glory and with all his former functions.

. . . for the sake of Moses, for his prophethood is a mighty thing, and the Taheb is his prophetic function.

The identification of the two, however, is usually a straightforward matter and only infrequently are details of their functions compared in that manner. It is abundantly clear from all the homogeneous literature that the Taheb is not primarily a prophet—after all Moses had surely completed that role during his first lifetime. The Taheb is a restorer and no more.

We hear little of the birth of the Taheb and what we learn is from mediaeval writings. Some attempt was made to identify the manner of Moses' birth with that of the Taheb. Abisha, often the culprit in such things, tells in his great Dream of the light of the Taheb shining in heaven over the earth; he speaks of his star (so Num. 24.17)¹ being 'in the midst of the heaven of heavens,' i.e. originated in the mystery of the cosmos, and hence (as in the case of Moses' birth) not through human will. He is to be born 'in peace'; compare the angelic words at the birth of Moses and Jesus in the respective traditions. He will grow up entirely pure² in all things. He will be called of the Lord and receive revelation.

Before discussing the nature of the Taheb's functions we must note what may be an assimilation from Christianity, for even as early as Amram Darah the Samaritans believed that at his coming the

¹ The basic proof-text for the Taheb's coming, after Deut. 18.15, 18.

² For the Judaist tradition of the Messiah's purity see the *Testament of Judah* 24.1.

Taheb would be accompanied by 'an assembly'. A variant note to the words 'his assembly' in Cowley's text (p. 42) informs us that two important manuscripts read 'and the assembly of the divine favour'. These late mediaeval manuscripts thus indicate that such questions as that under discussion were still being discussed (and texts altered)¹ even after the passing of fourteen hundred years of text-copying! The idea of the Taheb being accompanied by a host is not commonplace in the earliest literature and it may have crept into the texts in later times.

Whatever may be the actual mode of his coming—and we have only mediaeval legends on the subject—the immediate effect of his arrival in the community of Israel is the creation of peace and security. This state of affairs, about which there are statements from all periods, is to be a permanent one within the duration of the Second Kingdom. The Durran informs us that the Taheb will have a following of disciples (C. p. 45). They with him will restore the social structure, so that justice is done in all things. The nature of that judgement is stated:

The prophet will judge very righteously, not in anger or wrath. He will not be angry (at all).

Judaism's picture of the golden era is one of independence, peace, good government and justice, as, for instance, in Psalm 72, Enoch 90.30: 91.14, etc.² To this extent the Samaritan picture approximates closely to the Judaist.

The period of the divine favour thus begins with the advent of the Taheb. Peace on earth, goodwill toward men—this is to be the new community. This is the nature of the community of God's favour. The restoration by the Taheb is to manifest itself at every level of life. In general, the truth will be revealed (an oft-asserted remark, whatever precisely it may mean). The fourteenth-century writers, who compare the Taheb with Moses in more definitive detail, state that the Taheb will be given 'a Scripture' and be vested with prophethood; so Abisha in his great hymn (C. pp. 511-19). But such identifications do not appear to be true to the development of Samaritans as a whole on this point.

One of the early effects within Israel of the Taheb's ministry will be the restoration of true belief and real fear of God. Markah

¹ Though never in the case of Pentateuchal manuscripts.

² For the biblical picture of restoration see Jer. 23.5; Zech. 3.7f., etc. See further Moore, *Judaism* II, p. 314.

declares that the Taheb will reveal the truth (Memar IV.12), which may remind one of the statement in John 4.25. Before the restoration of true worship can be completed the apocalyptic war between the Taheb and the enemies of Israel must take place, about which we shall speak below. Assuming for the moment that the war is over and Israel is freed from persecution by its enemies, we note the various aspects of restoration involving worship. First Mount Gerizim is to be purified of all defilement, especially that caused by Israel's enemies. The Taheb is everywhere associated directly with 'the holy hill' and many of his activities are to be carried on there.

Happy the world when he who brings peace with him comes and reveals the divine favour and purifies Mount Gerizim (Durrán, C. p. 45.13f.).

The sanctuary, originally erected on Mount Gerizim but hidden away at the beginning of the era of divine disfavour initiated by Eli's defection, will be brought to light again by the Taheb. He will discover the cave in which it was hidden away on the holy hill and set it up again as it was.¹

May you see the habitation set up upon the holiest of mountains in the days of the prophet, the Taheb (C. p. 425.6).

And may the Lord come near unto you again on Mount Gerizim . . . and may you return to his favour and raise up this altar in the days of the Taheb, when he comes (C. p. 348.16-17).

Elaborate details about the setting up of the tabernacle are given in other mediaeval passages, suggesting that in that period the doctrine of restoration and the Second Coming had developed sufficiently for details to be worked out. In these passages we have a picture of the nature of the Second Kingdom from the ecclesiastic point of view; this expectation is founded on the glorious days of the first tabernacle on the mount. The whole sacrificial system will be renewed and Israel's part in the era of favour will be played to the full.

Some passages from the Middle Ages seem to claim that the Taheb will have other priestly functions as well, even to the extent that he will forgive sins. In one passage (anonymous, C. p. 750.15f.) this forgiveness of sins on the corporate and the individual scale is associated with the restoration of the dead, but this is almost certainly one of the late passages which link the Taheb's ministry with the preparation for the Day of Vengeance and Recompense.

¹ That belief in the hidden sanctuary existed in the first century AD is indicated by Josephus (*Antiquities* xviii. 4.1-2), who tells of an enthusiast who led many Samaritans up the mountain, promising to recover the sacred vessels for them.

The revived ecclesiastic community will be able then to cast aside the Arabic language and speak again in the sacred language, Hebrew.¹ This belief, most frequently mentioned in fourteenth-century sources, may be associated with the great revival in Samaritanism of that century, when Hebrew did, in fact, become once more the language of liturgy and worship. It is probably true that it was that century more than any other that gave a tremendous fillip to Samaritan eschatological ideas. It is likely that this was brought about by the continual arrivals of groups of Damascene Samaritans in Nablus; these would bring with them many notions commonplace in Eastern Samaritanism, but alien to the conservative (priestly) doctrines of their western brethren.

Preparatory to his great military campaigns, the Taheb is to unite all Israel under his banner, which means that Ephraim (Israel) and Judah will once again be a united kingdom, but as far as can be seen it is a union of Israel under God for worship and faith in the first instance.

However, there is a great deal said about the military work of the Taheb, from the Defter's early sections right through to the latest literature. The biblical warrant for this belief is given as Deut. 33.16-17, the blessing of Joseph (the ancestor of the northern tribes) by Jacob. No detail is given about the exact form the Taheb's battles are to take. We read that he will conquer eleven nations and eventually subdue the whole world—the full apocalyptic picture. Some passages speak of seven nations only, but in neither case are the nations specified. The Defter picture is that

The Taheb will remove wrath from Israel and God will give him great victory . . . over the whole world (C. p. 45.15-16).

According to Abisha's Dream the eleven nations in particular are mentioned in the Law, but he does not specify further.

A typical apocalyptic element appears in some mediaeval literature, where we find the belief in a Gog-Magog legend.² According to this, the Taheb will have victory over the 'supreme enemy', the last stronghold of evil and presumption against God in the world. This is apparently the Antichrist legend, which figures in all the main Near Eastern religions. This legend may have been inherent in Samaritan

¹ For the context in which this belief is set see C. p. 513.27f.

² The best example in the Liturgy is in Abisha's Hymn in the Day of Atonement Liturgy (especially C. pp. 513f.).

belief from early times, though we have no actual occurrence of it in our earliest sources. Judging from I John 2.18 (the people were told Antichrist would come), the belief was current in the first century AD. The Judaist belief, possibly the direct source of the Christian, was that Antichrist would appear among the true believers, proclaim himself God incarnate, and claim to be worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem. The reincarnate prophet (*Elijah*) would denounce him and thereafter put him to death. The *Nero redivivus* legend current in the third century would have been known to the Samaritans, too.

Yet the Samaritan form of the Antichrist legend was never closely like the Judaist, Christian or Islamic.¹ None of the grosser elements found in some Judaist and Islamic legends is to be found. Indeed, very little of the older type of legend appears in the Samaritan and what does appear comes from the Middle Ages only.

Leaving aside what may well have been an aspect of the legend not known in earlier Samaritanism, we find that the chief result of global victory is that the nations come to believe in what the Samaritans stand for. This, too, is in keeping with the oldest Judaist teaching on the subject based on the Old Testament prophets, that the nations will flock to Jerusalem and Israel will be the centre of a purified world.

The nations—even the Judaists—will believe in God, in Moses and in the Law (C. p. 514.2).

Abisha's statement here well represents the typical Samaritan hope about the belief of the nations.² In connection with this detail of the eschatological picture we have a letter of the Samaritans to Kautzsch, in which the word 'Taheb' is explained as meaning 'converter' (of the nations).³ Perhaps similar to this is the tradition underlying Acts 3.20–22, where the Samaritan 'proof-text' Deut. 18.15 is cited (approximately). It is to be noted that the Samaritan tradition is entirely different from that of the famous passage Mal. 4.5f.

The Second Kingdom is now established, the last enemy brought to heel, and righteousness and peace prevail. Markah has quite a lot to say about the Kingdom (though there is no 'king' as such, only the Taheb⁴). He tells of the Taheb repossessing the 'place which God

¹ See further the discussion in the writer's article 'The Day of Judgement in Near Eastern Religions' in *Indo-Iranica* 14.4, 1961, pp. 33–53.

² Cf. the thought of John 4.42.

³ Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 246, n. 169.

⁴ But Abisha speaks of the Taheb's crown and kingdom (C. p. 513).

chose' for Israel, namely Mount Gerizim. He will establish the leaders of the people of Israel just as they were in the days of the First Kingdom (Memar IV.12). The 'reign' of the Taheb is compared to that of Joseph in Egypt. All is well for the Hebrews and there is no more suffering or toil.

They will not be in poverty, nor will they be afflicted in judgement, for they walked in the way of righteousness. Their souls have relief within the kingdom (Memar IV.12).¹

In the days of the Second Kingdom the Hebrews will be the subject of praise from all quarters, while those formerly in control of the Samaritan people will be but 'a byword and a (mere) name' (C. p. 745). The Arabs come in for severe punishment and their language will be 'confused', a detail no doubt drawn from the Tower of Babel narrative in the Pentateuch.

The Samaritans may have had the idea that the Second Kingdom would last about a century. There are many passages from the mediaeval literature from which to quote in favour of the idea. There is no biblical warrant for the period of approximately a century, nor is it a Defer or Memar belief. For this concept we find two varying traditions. One is that the Taheb will live a hundred and ten years, like Joshua the ruler of the First Kingdom (cf. Judg. 2.8). The other is that he will live for a hundred and twenty years, like (the first) Moses (cf. Deut. 34.7).² There is, however, an element in the latest literature that throws into relief the uncertainty of the Samaritan position about the duration of the Second Kingdom. This is evidenced from the Malef (42), dependent on Chronicle I, where there is the tradition that Adam spent a hundred years after the fall in repentance. His repentance was accepted after that period had elapsed. Now the word 'Taheb', when not used as a proper name, means 'repentant' and it seems certain that the latest version of the belief in the Second Kingdom was related to the idea of an era of repentance prior to the general resurrection. This tradition is, however, rarely encountered and we can do no more than point it out here, as possibly representative of the latest period in the development of the eschatological outlook of the Samaritans. Judaist traditions about the length of the Messianic era are not fixed. There is a thousand years tradition (cf. II Enoch) from which the parallel

¹ Cf. the somewhat similar theme in Rev. 7.14-17.

² See further M. Gaster, *Oral Law*, pp. 266-9.

Christian chiliastic tradition developed, and there is a four hundred years tradition (as in IV Esdras). These Judaist traditions cannot truly be compared with the Samaritan, however, since the whole cast of the latter is within a different setting.

Whatever be the truth of the matter, there are many clear passages that associate, usually in optative expressions, the hundred years with the perfect performance of the Festivals, in peace and security, with increase in the nation's numbers, and so on. Hibatallah (C. p. 227) associated the hundred years with the Taheb's ministry of restoration and the re-erection of the sanctuary on the sacred mount. It is an era of worship and blessing:

In the hundred years may you celebrate this Passover festival Sabbath, while you enjoy tranquillity and peace (C. p. 256.8-9).

Each wishes his brother, 'May you live for the hundred years . . . in blessing' (C. p. 189.17-18).

Isaac b. Solomon (C. p. 265) hopes that God 'may deliver from all adversaries in the hundred years' era'. There are hundreds of such passages scattered throughout the mediaeval parts of the extensive Liturgy, so much so that we must take it that in that period the Samaritans believed in a sort of 'Messianic' era lasting a century, prior to the Resurrection and the Day of Vengeance.

The next step in the picture is the preparation for the Day of Vengeance. It has not previously been observed that even as early as Roman times the Samaritans connected the Second Kingdom with the ideal world to come. Thus there are two stages in the eschatology. The Second Kingdom is not only the vindication of Israel in the world, a period of reward and peace at last; it is also a period of preparation for the end of all things on earth, and that preparation takes the form of 'sorting out' the people of the world prior to the final assessment. Markah seems to have said more about this than the mediaeval writers, and it seems as if an important element in the Samaritan teaching fell by the wayside in favour of the Second Kingdom in the world.

Not wholly so, however, for the omission is rather a matter of emphasis. For Markah and a few mediaeval teachers like Abisha and Phinehas (who were still influenced by Markah's teaching) it was a matter of cosmic consummation; for others, no doubt conservative ecclesiastics,¹ it was a matter of the vindication of the Pentateuchal teaching, which does not explicitly teach that there will be a life

¹ Most of these writers are of the Levitical family.

beyond. Such writers, mainly liturgists, were more subject to doctrinal polemic and obliged to defend their claims for the Pentateuch against the encroachments of Christian traditions and perhaps those of Islam as well. The former group, who were responsible for the bulk of innovations, felt free to integrate Christian ideas with their own instead of being always on the defensive. Thus the Christian millennium beliefs so prominent in the Middle Ages could influence Markah's doctrinal successors, while the larger group of ecclesiastics pressed the Pentateuchal warrant to its furthest extent, even by illogical exegesis.

In the mediaeval writings therefore we find teaching about a hundred years' earthly paradise from the ecclesiastic writers, and from the others teaching about a life of bliss in the invisible world. The latter do not ignore the belief in the Second Kingdom in the world; they place their *final* hope in 'the world to come'. We shall examine this hope in Chapter XXI.

Part of the Taheb's ministry is the separation of the elect from the rejected. An anonymous writer speaks of the restoration of the dead (C. p. 770) after the Taheb has forgiven sins. Markah goes further by stating that God will glorify the dead when the Taheb has revealed the truth (Memar II.9). We cannot be dogmatic about the meaning of such ideas, but we may safely assume that there is an association of some kind between the last period of the Second Kingdom and the Resurrection and ensuing Day of Judgement.

Perhaps more information about the Samaritan ideas implicit in Markah's writings will become available to help us to understand the relationship between the Second Kingdom and the Day of Vengeance. However, the Taheb himself is to die and be buried before the Resurrection. According to the only sources available for this belief, mediaeval in origin, the Taheb will die some time before the end of the kingdom which he established. He is to be buried beside Joseph and Joshua on Mount Gerizim. This is not the end of the kingdom, and the Resurrection is not yet. The tabernacle will not again be hidden away, but the light within the sanctuary will burn until the end of the world. The priests in this prelude to the ideal world will continue to serve at the sanctuary, offerings will continue to be made and the High Priest will make atonement every day¹ for himself and the congregation.

¹ This detail highlights the concentration of the spiritual activity then, for the Day of Atonement is, of course, an annual festival in normal life.

Thus the new community awaits the end, an end that will be the gateway to the ideal life for those who have been righteous. The next part of the picture deals with the cataclysm that will befall the people of the Taheb's generation.

Happy is the Taheb, happy his disciples who are like him, happy the world when he who brings peace comes and reveals the divine favour, purifies Mount Gerizim, Bethel, removes trouble from Israel, when God gives him glorious victory whereby he overcomes the whole world (C. p. 45.13f.).

God's promises to the ancient Hebrews have been kept. Israel have experienced his promises. All is under the divine sway. Bliss like this cannot last for ever on earth, for earth is not the highest part of the cosmos. It is but a pale reflection of the real, the upper world. It is to that world that Israel must find their way. The means to that end are in God's hands. His is the final decision. The Day of Judgement is his method of final decision, and to the prelude to that day we now turn.

XVII

THE RESURRECTION AND INTERCESSION

I • THE RESURRECTION

*Set your mind against walking in the path of evil, lest you shed your life and, when you awaken from your sleep, find yourself in utter confusion.*¹

THERE IS A cosmic stillness everywhere, a calm before the storm, as the last days of the Second Kingdom pass gradually away. The signal that the final events are about to take place will be a terrible cataclysm in the world. This cataclysm is the prelude to the Resurrection. The Samaritans seem to have paid close attention to this belief and we read in the literature of all periods of the events that will herald the end. From Markah until modern times Samaritan writers have presented a wonderfully varied series of graphic pictures, and some of these we shall present.

He will summon his creatures as he wills. The earth will be split because of the great terror (then), and all of them will come forth as quick as a wink of the eye and will arise in a moment before him (Memar IV.12).

It will be apparent to the reader that the Samaritans like the Judaists and early Christians (and later the Muslims) inherited many details of the ancient imagery.

In the eventful days before the Lord turns his wrath upon all the peoples of the Tabeb's generation who deal in oppression, the earth and its generation will be destroyed as in the flood. The light of the sun will be paled at the beginning of every month; the moon and stars will not shine. Everything that exists will be overturned—valleys and mountains—by the shaking caused by the Day of Vengeance (Abisha's dream).

This quotation, typical of the belief from Roman times onwards, suggests that the cataclysm will be more than one great and sudden

¹ C. p. 757.30-31.

upheaval. The suggestion is that it will spread over a period of time for *month by month* the sun will cease to shine in full. Now this notion, explicitly stated only in the mediaeval literature, seems to be matched most closely by the New Testament imagery, which presents Christ as saying:

In those *days*, after that darkness, the *sun* will be darkened, the *moon* will not give its light; the *stars* will come falling from the sky, the celestial powers will be *shaken* (Mark 13.24).¹

The New Testament presents not a one-day cataclysm, but a period of cosmic disaster, in which 'shaking', no doubt due to earthquakes, will play a prominent part.

A second element in the picture is the destruction of all living creatures, an element found also in the earlier apocryphal literature.² The Dream of Abisha continues with the statement that 'all flesh will expire before the awesome majesty of God'.

A third element is the great conflagration that is to sweep through the world right down to Sheol and the foundations of the mountains. This thought of world conflagration is found in the New Testament, too, in II Peter 3.7, 10, 12.

A fourth element in the cataclysmic events is to be the effect of the earthquaking; it will result in the opening of the graves of the dead, and at this point we turn specifically to the Resurrection itself.

According to some mediaeval works there is to be the blast of a trumpet, a signal for the dead to rise from their graves. So Yom ad-Din (Chapter 26) states:

Then the bodies will revive and come forth from the earth in immediate response to the mysterious power of the divine trumpet. When the trumpet sounds the spirits will return to their corpses, the earth will be split and those who have been buried in it will come forth.

The biblical warrant for this belief, typical, too, of the Islamic imagery after the Koran, is stated to be Ex. 19.13.³ Yom ad-Din goes on to describe the Resurrection scene in terms of the Mount Sinai theophany, stating that the 'ten signs' performed on Mount Sinai will again appear at the day of Resurrection. These signs are the fire, flames, darkness, cloud, sounds, lightnings, sound of the trumpet,

¹ And cf. Matt. 24.29, Luke 21.25, II Peter 3.7, 10, 12. For the Koranic imagery see Surahs 6, 22, 39, 69, 82, 84 and 99 especially. The remarks of Pfeiffer (*History of New Testament Times*, pp. 228f.) are interesting in this connection.

² See, e.g., the Book of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, etc.

³ Manifestly an E passage.

trembling, God's presence, angels in ranks. This imagery, derived directly from the Pentateuch, is typical of only some mediaeval and modern writers, and is hardly formulated eschatological belief. All we can say is that the identification of Mount Sinai's theophany with future scenes on Mount Gerizim, which are preludes to the Day of Judgement, represents a gradual and growing doctrine over centuries, but not found in the earliest material.

At a time when God will decide, every valley and hill shall tremble; creatures shall rise up, old and young alike, and then the reckoning! (C. p. 758.2-3).

The expression 'old and young alike' is merely a Semitic idiom for 'everyone of them'. It is a total and general resurrection; there is no thought of individual resurrection among the Samaritans. Men will arise from the grave in a mass and stand before God on the Day of Judgement. A fuller description of the scene of resurrection is contained in Abisha's Dream, where we read that the destruction of men, beasts, vegetation, etc., will be total. He continues:

They will see the glory of the Lord. . . . When he calls 'See now . . . ' [Deut. 32.39], all places that contain the dead will be shaken . . . the ground will be rent and from it spirits will come forth (C. pp. 515.32-516.2).

Abisha goes on to speak of the 'spirits of the penitent' rising; amongst these are those buried in the cave of Machpelah, whose

light will shine as brightly as that of the sun.

The proclamation by God of the words of Deut. 32.39 is a prominent element in the belief in the general resurrection. The Malef (190), though late, well expresses the standard view:

On the Day of Vengeance when he says 'See now . . . ' everything appointed will revert to what it was when it was first created from nothing. It shall come back a second time out of nothing after being mere dust. In one moment it shall return to the former condition and all the dead shall rise from the dust alive and shall see the glory of the Lord and hear his great voice—

all this on the analogy of the divine *fiat*.

Readers may wonder upon what biblical warrant the Samaritans founded their belief in a resurrection. The warrant is the Samaritan reading of part of Gen. 3.19, where the Masoretic text is translated:

You are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The Samaritan Pentateuch text reads

You are dust, and to *your* dust you shall return, a difference of one Hebrew letter only. All Samaritan exegetes agree that this means that men will return to their former physical state and form.¹ Therefore, resurrection from death is necessary. We do not know if they deliberately altered the text of Gen. 3.19 in order to accommodate a belief already in existence amongst them, or whether this variant like many others has as great antiquity as the equivalent in the Masoretic text employed by the Judaists and Christians. What is certain is that their sacred Scripture gives them warrant for such a belief. The Malef (38) explicitly states in connection with Gen. 3.19 that after the decomposed body's return to its former dust (the special dust of Mount Gerizim) the spirit, which had left the body at death, will then return to the reconstituted body.² There is also a tradition in the Hillukh³ that Adam had foreknowledge 'through the holy spirit' of his death and of his return to life in the next world.

There is further information from the Malef (124) with regard to the process involved in the uniting of body and spirit. This is in connection with the 'prophets of the Lord'.⁴

But on the Day of Judgement . . . bodies and spirits will be joined together, but only by the most excellent *holy light*. Their clothing will be light and they shall be good and pure, just as Adam was in the Garden of Eden.

This late use of the term 'holy light' represents a coalescence of the older belief in light as a constituent in man, as we have observed in studying the creation of man and the existence of his image, and the much later belief in 'holy spirit' rather than light, a belief typical, too, of the Commentary on the Asatir, as the quintessence of man's being.

One problem exists in regard to the Resurrection. How early did the Samaritans believe in it? We may answer only by implication and deduction. The Judaists seem to have believed in it, judging from the apocryphal writings, in pre-Christian times, and we cannot assume that such a belief appeared quite suddenly then for the first time. If we may judge from the evidence of religions generally, we

¹ And by the same token to the Garden of Eden.

² For similar Christian and Judaist traditions see the interesting passages in *The Books of Adam and Eve*, 1.4, Baruch 50.2, Pirke Rabbi Eliezer 42.

³ Gaster, *Oral Law*, p. 137.

⁴ By whom are meant all those who had spoken for God.

may feel certain that such a notion was in existence long before, although it may not have received the ecclesiastical recognition accorded to it by its appearance in literature. The Samaritans undoubtedly were well acquainted with such ideas long before the Christian era began, though they may not have given 'official' assent until much later.¹ Markah makes definite statements, as we have seen, about the Resurrection itself, and he has plenty to say about the Day of Vengeance and Recompense that follows immediately upon the Resurrection.

Markah provides the following picture, which is clearly typical of the centuries immediately before and after the advent of Christianity.

God will summon his creatures as he wills . . . and all of them will come forth . . . and arise in one moment before him (Memar IV.12).

This statement, already cited in its full form, is undoubtedly typical of the early Samaritan belief. Markah seems to have believed also in a restored earth, a purified Mount Gerizim and an *earthly* state of bliss instead of the spiritual state to which we shall refer later. At this point we proceed to the next stage in the eschatological belief, the Intercession.²

All the dead will come to life again from the earth. They shall see the glory of God. . . . They shall acknowledge the truth that he is one and that there is none besides him, and that they had all died and been brought back to life in order to be interrogated (Malef 186).

2 • THE INTERCESSION

*O Moses, true apostle, through your wondrous prayers and intercession be our saviour and deliverer from the burning fire.*³

All the resurrected are now assembled before God. They have heard the awesome words of Deut. 32.39 from the mouth of God and stand

¹ For the problem of the Dosithean sect which did not believe in the Resurrection, see what has been said in the Introduction (Chapter I, Section 4), and further Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, pp. 254f. According to Origen commenting on Matt. 22.23f., the Samaritans did not believe in the Resurrection at all, but he must have been referring to the then large Dosithean sect.

² For the Judaist outlook on the Resurrection see Moore, *Judaism* II, pp. 296f., where all the important biblical and post-biblical references are given. The later form of the Judaist apocalyptic represented in IV Esdras and the Syriac Baruch seems closer to the Samaritan (cf. especially IV Esdras 7.26-44). In this form we have a second kingdom and death of Messiah, followed by a resurrection and judgement. The Book of the Revelation (coeval with this later Judaist literature) presents a picture of a new earth and portrays the Word of God as conqueror (19.11-21.8 and 19.13 respectively).

³ Ghazal ad-Duwaik.

in terror. They are ready to be judged. They stand in fearful anticipation.

One great stress in the Islamic teaching, that on the standing before God, comes out much earlier in the Samaritan belief.¹ In the Malef (124) we read of *ha-ma'mad* (the standing) which is to take place on the Day of Judgement, but before the actual judgement, in Eden; this is apparently a separate element in the great gathering of the resurrected, inasmuch as it pertains primarily and perhaps solely to the righteous (already separated from the unrighteous in the Taheb's day). It would appear that later Samaritanism has yielded to Islamic influence in regard to the imagery employed for the picture of waiting humanity on the Day of Judgement.

Before we discuss the actual intercession that is to take place during 'the standing', there is one difficulty to be mentioned. We have referred to the proclamation by God of the words of Deut. 32.39. We have assumed that these words were proclaimed at the time of resurrection. Many writers, however, seem to place this event in the time of waiting, between the resurrection and the judgement. The earliest stratum in the eschatology places it in the resurrection tradition, while the mediaeval and modern generally place it in the intercession tradition. Some mediaeval writers, however, place it in the former, while many mediaeval and almost all modern writers place it in the latter. In this we have a clue to the development of the eschatology. The changes that undoubtedly took place in the fourteenth century as a result of the arrival of Eastern Samaritans in Nablus may have caused some confusion for a time in respect of some details of the eschatology. We may regard the shift of the proclamation of Deut. 32.39 as being in this category.

During the standing the intercession is to take place. This is a mediaeval and modern doctrine. Its roots seem to extend far into the past, however, but possibly not into pre-Christian times. The general picture we can view from the literature is best painted in the Dream of Abisha. Abisha tells his readers that Moses, newly arisen from his grave, will stand in the midst of the resurrected people, Samaritans and non-Samaritans, his radiant light shining.² He will pray to the Lord on behalf of his people, as he did during his lifetime (Ex. 32.31f.). God will say to him, 'My prophet and my Man,

¹ E.g. Markah, Memar IV.12, quoted in the last section.

² Markah had taught, as we observed, that Moses' light was still upon him in his tomb.

wait until you see the glory I shall manifest. You are not to do anything contradictory to what I say. I have indeed favourably accepted your prayer.' This is astonishing in view of the unity of purpose between God and Moses that makes the figure of Moses so unique during his lifetime, but here we are dealing with mediaevalism and not with long-developed doctrine.

Then follows an elaborate ritual of intercession, which involves even the angels. They are to step forward one by one and make enquiry of each person, asking whether they had in their lifetime observed the Law and all its commandments. Next the 'righteous three' (Patriarchs) come forward and make supplication to God on behalf of the Israelites. Finally Moses steps forth again, accompanied by Aaron and his sons. His prayers for the faithful will be granted by God, it is said, in the judgement.¹ While Moses petitions the Lord, Aaron and his sons perform the Atonement rites as on the Festival of the Day of Atonement.

As a result of the intercession and atonement, the people are then divided into two groups, one for the Garden of Eden and the other for the fire. Moses continues to pray for the guilty, so as to bring them out of the condemnation of eternal fire, and that they may be freed from that torment by being reduced quickly and mercifully to dust.

Abisha's is one point of view, and in the main it is the position obtaining in the Middle Ages. Some writers between Markah's time and the fourteenth century held views as stern as his concerning reward and punishment and had less to say about the intercession. Judging from the material on the subject, it was only from the fourteenth century that a full-blown doctrine of intercession developed.²

We cannot regard this doctrine as prevalent throughout Samaritanism, but it became standardized in time, and it is the position obtaining today. It may well be that Islam gave to Samaritanism its teaching about the intercession, for in that faith, although God's will is paramount, permission is to be given to Muhammad to intercede for the resurrected people. On the other hand, it could equally well be Eastern Christian influence that was responsible for the development of the Samaritan doctrine.³

O our master Moses, you will be our helper on the Day of Vengeance and Recompense.

¹ Gesenius, *Carmina Samaritana* 7.30.

² See also M. Gaster's remarks in *Studies and Texts* I, p. 94.

³ See further the writer's observations in 'The Day of Judgement in Near Eastern Religions' in *Indo-Iranica* 14.4, pp. 45f.

O Moses, possessor of God's Word, be for us the one who will save us from destruction and perdition by the consuming fire.

O Moses, prophet of the whole world, help us to pass into the glorious garden.

O Moses, perfect priest, lord of fasting,¹ be our helper at the resurrection (Ghazal ad-Duwaik).

¹ The reference to fasting is prominent in such appeals; it relates the experience of Moses on Sinai to his intercessory role.

XVIII

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE AND RECOMPENSE

*On the Day of Vengeance all the dead shall rise for the reckoning.*¹

ON THE SUBJECT of the Day of Judgement in general the Samaritans of all periods seem to be agreed, though they may differ in some details. Markah already has a fully developed doctrine of what is more correctly called the Day of Vengeance and Recompense.

Before studying the signification of that day, we must note that belief in it marks the final tenet of the creed. It is possible, certainly not proved, that the original Samaritan title for that day was simply 'the Day of Vengeance' and that only later did the title expand to include the Day of Recompense.² Markah uses both titles, but more often the shorter. If we follow the history of this belief from the Old Testament throughout early Judaist literature, we can see that the primary element is punishment for the wicked rather than reward for the righteous.³ Amos's view of the 'Day of the Lord' may represent something like the oldest form of the belief, but there was a very long and complicated development, even within the Old Testament itself, before the categories with which we are familiar evolved. It is certain that Samaritanism, like its sister religions, developed belief in a 'day of judgement' very early, and indeed all the oldest known literature shows an already evolved belief.

Properly speaking, the eschatological beliefs already considered belong to the doctrine of the Day of Judgement, but as has been shown the whole process involved more than one day. The cataclysm

¹ C. p. 710.25.

² For 'Recompense' one may justifiably render 'Reward', but the Arabic translation usually is the former.

³ Though not in the Samaritan belief, as we have seen, where recompense replaces retribution.

for one thing is to last for a period. The Resurrection is the end of one stage and the beginning of another. The signs of the end are best treated separately, that we may clearly view the end itself. The 'standing' may be regarded as the interval between the two stages and the intercession the first act of 'the day' itself. This chapter, then, deals with the process of actual judgement, after the interrogation and intercession. Before examining this in isolation, let us observe something of the history of the belief in such a day.

We shall quote Markah in the main, recognizing that what he wrote was to be repeated over and over again with only the slightest modifications and expansions in later times.

It behoves you to understand about the last day and to do action that will bring you relief then. Woe to any man whom no (good) action precedes! It will be stored up for him then! (Memar IV.5.)

Markah does not state when the Day of Vengeance will be, but in the mediaeval writings it is stated that it will come after the end of the sixth millennium from creation, and that the span to the Day of Vengeance will be exactly six thousand years; expectations of this order are found in modern times.¹ Many passages from the Memar and later writings stress that the Day of Vengeance is the consummation of creation. The span of earthly existence reaches from creation till then, and thus the span represents the microcosm of existence. We have spoken of the macrocosm, the cosmic creation, and we shall see that eternal life, as distinct from everlasting life (on earth), must take place in the invisible world which is the real world. Pre-existence and post-existence, though never categorized to the same extent as existence (on earth), are truly representative of the nature of the real, macrocosmic life. The Day of Vengeance brings life on earth to an end and enables the righteous of the world to live again, this time in ideal conditions. The analogy is with the rebirth of the world and the human race at the time of the flood.

The Samaritans base their belief about the Day of Vengeance and Recompense on their text of Deut. 32.35, where instead of the Masoretic text's 'vengeance is mine and recompense' they read 'on the day of vengeance and recompense', an addition of two letters to

¹ There are possible traces of an undeveloped belief that the year 6000 after creation would bring the first signs of the end and that this period of signs in heaven and earth would last any length of time within the seventh millennium.

the Hebrew word for 'mine'.¹ The concept of such a day existed in the first century BC, as we have seen.²

There is further evidence that the Samaritans had in early times a cosmic concept of the day, in that Moses is specially related to it. Many passages speak of Moses being 'raised up' *for creation and the Day of Vengeance*. Just as he was raised up and made the first of created beings and thereafter all created things came into being through him, so is he raised up (this time also from the invisible world, his physical death and lying in a tomb being largely ignored in the writings) for the Day of Vengeance, when he is to act as intercessor. Creation and the Day of Vengeance are often related as beginning and end of the one thing. God is 'God of creation and Judge on the Day of Vengeance' (C. p. 4.19-20). This early Deifter statement reminds one of the Judaist attribution of three main functions to God—creator, redeemer and judge. Creation and judgement on the creation are the beginning and the end. Markah believed that Moses would in a sense repeat his most important earthly functions.

The great prophet Moses 'planted' a sanctuary. All who seek the Lord gather at it [Ex. 35.7]. So too in the Day of Vengeance . . . Moses will do, and he will deliver the beloved and destroy all the enemies (Memar IV.3).

The Day of Vengeance is thus a time of deliverance for the righteous and of destruction for the wicked. It is rare to find a Samaritan writer asserting that Moses will destroy the wicked; it is usual to ascribe this task to God.

The arrival of Moses on the scene marks the real beginning of the proceedings of the last day. After he has completed his ministry of intercession for the last time, the separation of the 'sheep from the goats' begins. Before we observe the final events of the judgement, let us see how Markah regarded the day. What did it really amount to? Was it to be really a day of assessment or of condemnation? The most famous passage in all extant Samaritan literature on this subject is Markah's description in the Memar IV.12:

(It is) the day of recompense for all the good, the day of resurrection for all men, the day of regret for all the wicked, the day of reckoning for all things done, the day of recompense for the good and the evil,

¹ The Septuagint has the same reading as the Samaritan text.

² See the Manual of Discipline 9.23-24. For the New Testament see particularly Rev. 22.12, the second part of which is found almost *verbatim* several times in Markah's writings.

the day of interrogation about all things done by all creatures, the day of trembling for all feet, the day of terror for all limbs, the day of reckoning for all actions, the day in which every person receives recompense, the day of judgement, the day of tears, the day of deliverance, the day of assembly, the day of truth, the day of fear, the day of the standing, the day of coming forth from the ground, the day of grief for all the wicked, the day of joy for all who were obedient, the day on which the Lord of the world shall appear and proclaim, 'I, even I, am he, and there is none other with me' (Deut. 32.39).

Almost all of the elements of the Samaritan eschatology appear in this passage, though some of them are inchoate rather than established. We have noted the feature of the standing already. We now pick up the threads of the account from the point where the intercession ended and before the final judgement is delivered. Markah's description of the appearance of God has never been surpassed; here it is:¹

I, even I, am he, who lives above creation and Mount Sinai.
 I, even I, am he, who is and there is no other besides me.
 I, even I, am he, who is without time or place.
 I, even I, am he, to whom the life of the world belongs.
 I, even I, am he, who raised and spread out by my power.²
 I, even I, am he, who planted the Garden and uprooted Sodom.
 I, even I, am he, to whom all belongs and to whom all returns.
 I, even I, am he, who slays the living and brings to life all dead.
 I, even I, am he, who recompenses my adversary with vengeance
 (Memar IV.12).

The full cosmic significance is stressed in the repeated emphases on the proclamation of Deut. 32.39 by God himself, and not by an angel according to the Judaist tradition. This moment of time, the last, brings the final revelation of God in history, the revelation that is to end history!

The sins of all men have been stored up in advance and these are known in every detail to the divine judge. Special mention is made of people like the Sodomites, the Tower-Builders, the Amalekites, the Egyptians, but even more so of those responsible for what in some ways is regarded as the most heinous of crimes, viz.:

They made a golden calf and became enemies of God. He designated their sins for the great Day of Judgement (Memar IV.5).

¹ The theme here is, as has been observed, referred to the intercession in many later passages.

² The verbs in this verse refer to the creative process.

So Abraham ha-Qabazi gives the same, but a fuller picture:

Know that on your right and on your left scribes record your deed;¹ it is sealed up in God's storehouse for the Day of Vengeance and Recompense (C. p. 233.15-17).

Based on the teaching of Deut. 32.35, 41, the general picture of reward and punishment is clear. Further evidence from the Law comes from Gen. 9.5² and other passages. Ex. 20.6 is one of the favourite quotations by Samaritan writers in connection with reward (and so Deut. 5.10), the Decalogue being quoted wherever exegesis allows. The Law does not specify whether judgement will be made on an individual or on a corporate basis, and both levels of judgement figure in the eschatological writings of Markah. The mediaeval writers usually speak of judgement on the nation, but there are some references to the recompense of the individual. Markah seems to have had more to say about judgement of the individual than did his successors in the Liturgy who, because they were liturgists, wrote of the community's responsibilities and therefore the judgement on their execution of these. This is not to say that Markah was not conscious of the national failure to do the divine will, or the later writers of the individual's responsibilities. It is a matter of emphasis. Throughout the literature both levels receive sufficient stress. According to Montgomery,³ it was in later times that the Day of Vengeance came to be regarded as a time of individual as well as communal vindication and requital. One thing is certain, however; no man, no nation, had any control or influence over the judgement to come. Markah seems to have been specially conscious of this fact, and we may regard his attitude as due to the absence in his ideology of a doctrine of intercession. It may have been that the lesser emphasis on individual retribution in mediaeval times was due to the belief in an intercession, a doctrine which was linked closely with atonement as practised in Israel, and hence was largely a communal matter. Markah writes of the inability of men to exercise control over their destiny:

Be not an enemy to God, or you will be subject to judgement. You will have no control over it and you will have no deliverer (Memar IV.6).

¹ There is no developed belief in recording angels as in the related religions. Only a few writers make reference to it.

² Where the Samaritan text reads 'living being' for 'beast' (the Hebrew words being very similar).

³ *The Samaritans*, p. 240.

According to him men in his time could not comprehend the Day of Vengeance. He continues:

All we know is that it will be good for those who are to be delivered then. By well-doing they have prepared for it. There will be no fire for them. They have succeeded in saving themselves by their actions; from evil desirings they kept away. Therefore their Lord honoured them (*ibid.*).

Thus we reach the point, also found not infrequently in the later literature, that although men may not be able to exercise any influence on the decision of God on the day, they could nevertheless influence the decision beforehand by their service and witness. Markah saw no need for any doctrine of intercession, and it is perhaps a matter of regret that this aspect of Markah's teaching gradually lost ground as time passed.

The judgement on sinners is certainly beyond the control of the sinners. On this Markah is quite insistent.

The sinner goes to the fire and God has no compassion for him (Memar VI.10).

He presents the rather harsh picture of what the sinner will face then. He speaks mainly of unrepentant sinners, the type who hardened their heart against God. Expounding Deut. 32.12 he writes:

Woe to those who are not so [i.e. righteous] in this world! They are troubled and on the Day of Vengeance punished. God is too righteous for them . . . they cry to him, but he does not answer. They are punished, for he recompenses every doer according to his deed (Memar IV.6).

Later in the same section he presents an interrogation by the Lord of the sinner. The questions he asks relate to obedience, prayer, reading of the Law, good action. Speaking particularly of the idolater, he writes:

He who has made himself a god to help him, let it come on that day!
Let it come and deliver him.

It became the regular practice in the Middle Ages to relate the scene of the judgement to Mount Gerizim, conceived in cosmic terms. So Abdallah:

. . . the holy *everlasting* hill—none other—whereon he will judge on the Day of Vengeance (C. p. 238.17-18).

Different views are held by writers of different periods over the fire that is to destroy the world. According to some, the fire will sweep through the world during the cataclysm that precedes the

Resurrection, Mount Gerizim alone being exempted from destruction. According to others, who see the Day of Judgement as the prelude to life in the unseen world, the world conflagration takes place after the judgement is over. Thus the physical world and all who are condemned at the judgement are exterminated, and the vindicated righteous alone live on. The point of difference here is whether these righteous will live on the sacred Mount (preserved from fire for this very purpose) or will pass through the 'gate of heaven' on Mount Gerizim into the real and ultimate Garden of Eden which lies beyond the world.

The belief that Mount Gerizim alone will be exempt from destruction by fire may be due to two factors: (1) it is sacrosanct and cannot suffer the lot of ordinary creation; (2) it acts as a bridge between the two worlds and therefore between life on earth and life in bliss in the unseen. We may regard it as a step towards a belief in a hereafter, but we have not yet reached the stage of life beyond the world. In this connection we recall the attempt of Markah and others to speak of a restoration of the world, so that the life of bliss in the Garden of Eden, the reward of the righteous after judgement, is, in fact, life *in the world*, in the purified and restored world, on Mount Gerizim. This attempt was not apparently successful, and as century succeeds century we read more and more about bliss in the hereafter and less and less about the physical Mount Gerizim. As Samaritan thought on this subject advanced, the physical Mount Gerizim gave way before the *true* Mount in the unseen. Thus life on earth gives place before life in the unseen.

Angels are to be witness of all that transpires, from the sound of the trumpet right on through the standing and intercession to the final decision of God about the resurrected before him. Non-Samaritans will be there, too, but there is some doubt about what is to happen to them. According to some mediaeval writers there is no place for them at all in the Garden of heaven, and they are relegated to the fire, though to a quick extinction in contrast to the prolonged suffering of the condemned Samaritan. Others, however, seem to present a grudging admission that those who did not possess the Law could not be condemned in the same way as those who did. The two extremes are shown by a comparison between Abisha's outright condemnation of all non-believers and Markah's outlook:

Not all peoples will be questioned about their deeds, for they have not been called 'holy people' (Memar IV.11).

We have few passages to cite from, but it is clear from what material we have that Markah regarded the judgement as a time for the elect and non-elect alike. The non-elect are to be present for judgement, but they are not to be subjected to the same judgement as the elect. Presumably, if we may draw inferences, it is these non-elect who are interceded for by the Patriarchs and by Moses (prophet of the *world*). According to some passages many who are not righteous will be saved, but nowhere do we read that unrighteous Israelites will be delivered from the fire. We must assume from the sources available to us that good Israelites will go to the Garden of Eden, bad ones to hell, and non-Israelites somewhere in between. This belief would match many Judaist traditions about intermediary states, and it would confirm the Samaritan picture of the blissful state for the righteous of Israel, which, as we shall see below, could not be for non-elect peoples. Abisha's picture, however, coming from a period of more interest in religious orthodoxy and less in philosophical speculation, gives us a different view. In his Dream he writes:

As for the non-Samaritans, they shall rise from the tombs naked, their spirits evil-smelling. They have no deliverer from the fire and they will be burnt right down to Sheol.

It is probable that Abisha's position reflects the current Christian and Islamic ideology. Only Judaism seems to have steered clear at that time from such outright condemnation of any universalist salvation or even of the partial admission of some relief for those whose opportunities for preparation were less. The mediaeval Samaritan ideology is confused and totally unsystematized. We are presented with a picture of total destruction for the unbeliever, whether he had the chance to become a believer or not. On the other hand, although the mediaeval writers in the main accepted that picture, the self-same writers did have their traditions about the Taheb's conquest of the world resulting in the nations believing in the Taheb's mission and in God. Unfortunately, no passages exist to show whether many of the world's non-Israelites became 'Keepers of the Law', circumcised believers in the God of Israel. It is more than possible that thinking Samaritans of all periods would have agreed that such new believers would join Israel in the judgement, leaving all the unbelievers for the fire. The subject is fraught with difficulties, partly owing to lack of evidence and partly owing to the unsystematic

approach of the most important writers whose works have come down to us.

The final stage in the judgement procedure is reached when God, having to hand the records of all men's lives, interrogates those assembled and the angels lead those adjudged righteous to the Garden and those condemned to hell. The best mediaeval description of what will happen is found in *Yom ad-Din*.

God will separate the perfect ones from the transgressors. The perfect will be delivered, and when the Holy One comes they will approach, just as he singled out the priests on Mount Sinai. . . . The priests will then draw near to sanctify themselves. The ranks of angels on the appointed day will be just like those that were on Mount Sinai. Some of these will be the angels of favour, some angels of wrath and anger.¹ The angels of favour will surround the faithful, honouring and praising them, but those designated for wrath and anger will smite the unbelievers and punish them (Chapter 26).²

Abisha's picture is simpler and lacks the grosser elements of *Yom ad-Din*. He writes:

Then the people will be divided into two groups. The innocent holy ones will pass into the Garden of Eden and the condemned will be burnt in the fire.

It is at this point that we have the tradition of Moses' intercession, according to another version, when he will pray (a second time?) for the guilty and save them from eternal torture in the flames; they shall have 'an immediate end' and will be no more.

HEAVEN AND HELL

Gaster³ states the nature of heaven and hell admirably as follows:

The future reward of the Samaritans is painted in very sober colours, and . . . their conception of the life in Paradise is of the utmost simplicity; there is nothing of the sensuality of the Mohammedan paradise and nothing approaching the descriptions found in the Apocalyptic writings of Enoch and the Book of Revelation, nor those visions of Heaven and Hell found in the Apocalypse of Paul and in the Jewish visions of Heaven, Hell, and Paradise visited by Moses. This is also true of their description of Hell, which is subdivided into several compartments wherein the punishments vary according to the gravity of the sin committed.

¹ The existence of an angel named Mehablah in some late mediaeval sources seems to indicate belief in a destroying angel, after the Samaritan interpretation of Ex. 11.4-5. Mehablah (Meḥablāh) means 'the destroying one'. Cf. I Cor. 10.10, where for 'Destroyer' the Syriac (Peshitta) text has *meḥablānah*.

² For further details and for Gaster's translation of this, see *Oral Law*, pp. 113f.

³ *The Samaritans*, p. 92.

What Gaster reports about the Samaritan concept of heaven is apparently true of all periods of the literature, but his remarks about hell are restricted to the mediaeval material which is employed for his findings.

It is interesting that the Samaritans did not use the term Gehenna for hell as found in Judaist apocryphal writings and (in the form Gehinnom) in the Koran and other Muslim writings. Neither is the Old Testament Sheol, that vague shadowy place resembling the Hades of the Greeks, mentioned much. The normal description of hell is 'the fire', as so often in Islamic literature after the Koran.

There are no descriptions of hell in the early literature. The first elaborate picture comes from the *Hillukh*, where we read of seven degrees of hell, an enumeration corresponding by analogy to the seven heavens, of which we have spoken. In this enumeration Sheol comes first, followed by Abaddon (another Old Testament term) and Gehinnom is last. It is clear that the liturgists and exegetes as a whole did not take such a classification seriously, and we may regard it as not representative of Samaritan thought generally. However, Abisha seems to have believed in a seventh heaven, with Sheol at the opposite end of the scale.

Whatever the 'structure' of hell may have been believed to be, the most significant aspect of the teaching is the complete absence of any satanic power. No demons appear, no torturing angels (except for rare mentions), no fire spirits. This is entirely in keeping with what has already been stated in earlier chapters about the Samaritan conception of the one God, with whom or over against whom no cosmic or other supramundane power could exist. The Samaritan exegesis of Deut. 32.39 must in early times have militated against the development of themes found in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.¹

It is, as Gaster says, likewise true that the Samaritans did not develop fanciful and elaborate pictures of heaven. Like the Judaists, they identified the Garden of Eden with heaven, but there is a complete lack of the strange and rather fanciful imagery so typical of many Judaist legends.

Speaking of the Day of Atonement, Mufarrij² writes:

O you who seek the Garden of Eden, this day is yours, for it is like the Day of Vengeance. Blessed are you if you change your raiment and

¹ However, in the latest literature, under Islamic influence, the imagery of Gen. 3.24 (the 'flaming sword') and Deut. 32.24f. is used. See, e.g., the *Malef* 191.

² A fairly prominent seventeenth-century liturgist.

say, 'O my Lord . . . accept our repentance and turn aside disfavour . . . by the merit of him who received the two stone tablets' (C. p. 660.13-16).

What sort of place is the Garden? The Samaritans present conflicting views of it. It seems as though no hard and fast doctrine had developed acceptable to all. The *Hillukh* deals with the subject in full and describes life in the Garden as exactly like that of the first Eden, except that there will be vastly more people to enjoy it after the judgement. These will be like the angels 'in splendour and glory, clothed in light and free from every evil thing'.

Where is the Garden? All writers agree in placing it on Mount Gerizim. The identification with Mount Gerizim is found from Markah throughout the whole period up to modern times. Exactly what 'state' of being is involved is a far less easy question to settle, and it looks as though the Samaritans themselves varied in opinion between the physical and the spiritual. Some obviously thought of life in Eden after the Day of Judgement as 'out of this world', as we shall see in Chapter XXI, while others, especially of the fourteenth century, regarded the future bliss in Eden as a physical life in the only part of the world not to be obliterated by the world conflagration.

Now our thoughts must turn away from the end of the world to the ideal world, where dwell the righteous elect and presumably all those who turned themselves to the God of Israel and became Samaritan Israelites (a belief by no means widespread, as we have stated), and thereby became heirs of the promises of God.

PART FIVE

THE WORLD TO COME

XIX

THE GATEWAY TO THE UNSEEN WORLD

*Toward the gate of heaven let us turn, and let us set our stance in
the place of the angels.¹*

THIS TITLE, FROM the Day of Atonement Liturgy, immediately sets us on the path of the river. The source is *in the mountain* which is on biblical warrant marked out as the point of contact between the two worlds. The mountain is spoken of in the earliest sources as the Mount of Blessing (Deut. 11.29; 27.12). It is the place of the divine presence, the focal point on earth which God chose as the dwelling-place of his name.

We have seen in the brief study of the physical mount in Part Three that it is specially efficacious as a place for prayer. The favour of God is everywhere associated with the mount. Thus it is the place of divine presence. It was natural that the Samaritan should have the same sort of ideas about his mountain that the Psalmist had about Zion; he could have said, thinking of Gerizim, 'I will lift up my eyes to the hill, whence my aid comes.' The Eternal Mount becomes, therefore, a link between the divine source and man's need. In any case, there is biblical warrant for the belief that it was the 'gateway' to the holy habitation above. Jacob's dream for one gave that warrant, for Bethel, it is claimed,² is located on the north-west slope of the mount, still called by its ancient name Luz (Samaritan Luza). Thus the Samaritan claim gave the opportunity for identifying Gerizim with the scene of one of the most striking supernormal experiences of the Patriarchs. Bethel, the House of God, the central point of contact between the two worlds, became the very gateway to the invisible world. Men who, in the visible world, had the capability to 'lift up their eyes' in the deepest, mystical sense, could

¹ Abisha, C. p. 488. 21-22.

² But non-Samaritans would locate Bethel some distance south of Mount Gerizim.

enter through that gateway and stand 'in the place of the angels'. The two worlds meet on Mount Gerizim. Jacob's ladder, a product of supernormal experience, made that meeting possible.

Thou hast guided . . . unto thy holy habitation (Ex. 15.13), to this thy Mount Moriah, in which meritorious ones beseech thee and angels pray to thee (C. p. 222.22-23).

(The name Moriah occurs sometimes for Gerizim, and represents a Samaritan interpretation of the name Jehovah-Jireh along philological lines, thus identifying the Judaists' sacred mount with Gerizim.)

The dream of Jacob was only one of a series of revelations received by human beings. Even in mediaeval times Abisha could describe his dream as a vision of Mount Gerizim in the 'other-worldly' style of the Revelation of St John. There Moses stood and there the angels ascended and descended. In scores of passages from fourth- to eighteenth-century literature the theophany on Mount Sinai is directly transferred to Mount Gerizim. The theophany on Mount Sinai was the chief supernormal experience of Moses, whereby he actually entered into the invisible world and saw the *real* Law, the *real* tabernacle and the model of all things on earth. Just as the decrees and laws were expounded on Mount Sinai, so the ideal practice of them would be centred on Mount Gerizim in the future period of divine favour, a period of restoration by the Taheb who would function there. All that Israel's religion stood for would be manifested at its best when all that interfered with true worship on earth would be at an end. Mount Gerizim becomes the ideal centre in the future era, an era preliminary to the entry of the faithful into the real world. There God's will would be executed in perfection. The ideal of perfection in the new world is directly related to the first state of perfection in the Garden of Eden before sin entered into the lower world. Mount Gerizim is identified in its mystical (real) form with the Garden. Abisha speaks of the ideal sanctuary as located in the Garden and calls Eden 'the place of the habitation of *the House of God*' (cf. C. pp. 250f.). He goes on to identify Gerizim with Eden when he says:

This mountain is the place of worship *par excellence*, for it is *the House of God*.

His next remark confirms what was said earlier about the link between the two worlds.

The habitation on earth corresponds to the holy habitation on high.

He explains this on the ground of Jacob's statement that 'This is the gate of heaven.' Continuing the Eden figure, he writes:

We shall eat the choicest produce of the Everlasting Hill.

Markah had already studied the relationship of Gerizim and Eden. He placed them both in the *primaeval* context, but he does not seem to have gone the whole way with many *mediaeval* writers in identifying the two. The idea, however, of their intimate connection he explained as follows:

Gerizim's name was formerly 'The Mount of the East' (Gen. 10.30). The reason for the name . . . is simply that it and the Garden of Eden are *twins* (Memar II.10).

He stated that at creation, when the dry land appeared, Gerizim and Eden were uncovered. From the holy dust of the former, Adam's form was created. So man's origins are related to Gerizim, as his first dwelling is placed in Eden. This, according to Markah, was the divine scheme, whereby man's origin and first dwelling were in the perfection of the unseen. That is where man properly belongs.

The identifying of Gerizim with Eden is not a principle peculiar to the Samaritans, for Judaism has such traditions about Zion and Eden. There is the example of Ezek. 28.13f., from which the tradition developed that Eden was identical with the mount of God. In support of his identification of Eden with the sacred mount of the Judaists, Maimonides asserted that the Torah mentions the Garden of Eden as a place located on earth ('to the east').

It will be necessary to devote a special section to a consideration of the Garden in connection with the ideal world, and we shall there observe its relationship to Mount Gerizim more closely. Suffice it here to note the direct association of Gerizim in metaphysical terms with what we must call the real. In the ideal world true worship will be an unending practice. As a prelude to it and a foretaste of bliss to come for the righteous, we learn that in the Taheb's day all the statutory sacrifices will be restored as they were in the first days of Israel in Canaan; the true sanctuary, lost through the machinations of Eli, will be set up again, this time for ever. Ben Manir elaborates the point about the ideal nature of Mount Gerizim when he writes:

Passover is to be celebrated in the days of divine favour on Mount Gerizim, which is the habitation of the glory of the Lord. . . . There we shall see the holy sanctuary, the ark, the table and the candlestick, whose lamps will give light (C. p. 182.1 ff.).

Such statements of promise are commonplace and reflect the aspiration at the ecclesiastical level; for the men of religion the restoration of the true worship in all its glory was the ideal of ideals, and Mount Gerizim and nowhere else must be the centre of that worship in the new era. The only difficulty in this statement of hope lies in the problem whether Ben Manir was speaking of life in the Second Kingdom or the life of bliss in the hereafter. This problem, the most difficult of all problems in Samaritan studies, will be discussed in connection with the after-life.

From Markah to Abdallah, every writer seems certain that it is to be on Mount Gerizim that God's favour will manifest itself. Abdallah (C. p. 235) reminds his readers that according to the biblical testimony God sanctified 'the everlasting hill' and it will be there that he will judge on the Day of Vengeance, a day when the angels of the upper world will be present on the mount—as they were in Jacob's dream—to witness events of cosmic magnitude.

The place of the angels *vis-à-vis* Mount Gerizim was settled by Jacob's experience, and thereafter the angels are attendant on God on all occasions of great moment. The elect people in the world are separated from God only by the angels, and it is to the place of the angels in the scheme of things that we must now turn, in order that we may complete the picture of 'between the worlds' before observing the processes whereby the consummation of all things was to be brought about, from the Taheb's coming to the establishment of the faithful of the elect in permanent bliss.

XX

THE DENIZENS OF THE UNSEEN WORLD

The Power created heaven and earth everlasting, one for the use of angels, the other for the use of mortals.¹

NO NEAR EASTERN religion is more abundant than that of the Samaritans in reference to angels and to their place in the affairs of the world. We shall make some observations later about their life in the unseen. Here we are still dealing with the connection between the seen and unseen worlds, and thus the presence of angels on various occasions in the history of Israel calls for attention at this point. It used to be believed that the Samaritans had no belief in angels, but nothing could be further from the truth. They did not ever go in for the excessive and elaborate descriptions and the extensive hierarchies of the Judaists, but angels nevertheless have a significant part to play in the Samaritan's cosmic view of life. The Samaritan Targum often ascribes to angels what the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch attributed directly to God. This is no doubt in keeping with the ancient E tradition with its insistence on the avoidance of anthropomorphisms. The development of an angelology in Samaritanism did not follow that of the Judaists, nor was it influenced by the apocryphal writings. The Samaritan picture is perhaps nearer to that of Christianity, where there is a similar lack of specification and personalization. Like Christianity, Samaritanism believed profoundly in angels, in their existence in heavenly places, in their communication of the divine will, but unlike Judaism it did not develop a host of functions and a hierarchical scheme of divine or semi-divine beings.

As Cowley rightly observed:²

Even so early as St John's Gospel, the belief in a Messiah was generally accepted, while in the writings of Markah, the belief e.g. in a future life, in angels, and in the supreme position of Moses, is taken for granted.

¹ Dustan, C. p. 69.14-15.

² JQR 8, 1896, p. 568.

Markah presents no special study of angels, and indeed the reader of his *Memar* and Hymns is left in no doubt that he did not regard belief in angels as of recent origin. Obviously the Samaritans long before his time had believed in angels.¹

If we may recapitulate from the chapter on creation, angels were not made of the same constituent elements as men, but were of a finer texture. They were created before men, though not before Moses. Before there was a heaven and an earth, i.e. before there was a division in creation, angels existed. The Samaritans found no place for a belief that angels existed eventually in both worlds, the heavenly angels abiding in the glory of God, the 'fallen' angels (of which the Samaritans say nothing) living close to earth's environment to do their malicious work in opposition to the will of God.²

As a result of their less material constitution, angels are naturally superior to man in their nature and being. Some idea of the levels of being involved is given by Markah, where he speaks of the human Moses as becoming superhuman:

Moses was exalted above the whole human race and he progressed until he was gathered with the angels (*Memar* IV.12).

Moses ascended (at his passing) from human status to that of the angels (*Memar* V.3).

These remarks indicate that Markah was no theological specialist as far as angels are concerned. He did not study them as did the mediaeval Abul Hasan, who saw them as utterly different from men, so that one could not rightly speak of progressing from human to angelic status; this would be to progress from one to another of different categories of being. It is possible, however, that Markah made such assertions—of Moses and Moses only—in order to convey the high status possessed by angels. They could be compared to Moses!

As has been stated, there is no developed hierarchy in the Samaritan angelology. Yet names of particular angels do occur here and there in the Liturgy and in other writings. It must be stressed that most of the small number of references to angels come from the mediaeval writings and even then they seem to have derived from

¹ For the belief of Epiphanius, Origen, Leontius, Philastrius, etc., that the Dosithean Samaritans did not believe in angels, see Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, pp. 215f.

² Unlike Judaism, Samaritanism has no doctrine of fallen angels, nor have angels of some superior order any role in a heavenly court as in Judaist traditions. Similarly the Samaritans have no traditions like the Judaists' about Cherubim, Seraphim, Ophanim, etc. For Judaism's quite distinctive beliefs on this subject, see Moore, *Judaism* I, pp. 405f.

the exegetical studies of the Pentateuch. Although this book confines itself to the norm and deals only with those beliefs that can be described as explicit or even implicit in the teaching of Markah and his successors up to modern times, yet we must note these names briefly and say a word about their origin.

Four names appear several times, sometimes singly or in pairs, sometimes (rarely) all together in the same passage. Thomson¹ quotes Petermann as saying:

They (the Samaritans) recognize four ruling angels which are named; Phanuel is the first, and under him Anusa, Kabbala, and Nasi.

Thomson speaks of the derivation of these names; he shows that Penuel (Phanuel) is found in Enoch 54.6, 'occupying the place in which Uriel generally stands'. He derives it rightly from Gen. 32.24, where we read of Jacob wrestling with the angel *at the place* he was to call Peniel. Anusa he derives from the Egyptian outcry (*anusa* = let me flee) in Ex. 14.25. Thomson, however, quotes Montgomery for the view that the name Anusa is derived from the name of the antediluvian Patriarch Enosh. As for Kabbala (better Kebala) most authorities look to the Hebrew word of that pronunciation in Num. 4.20, where no proper name is intended. Another derivation sometimes suggested is the word (*qabbala*) in Hebrew meaning 'secret doctrine'. Since Abul Hasan speaks of the angels having 'special knowledge' not available to human beings, the latter derivation, though far from satisfactory, may be more plausible than the derivation from Num. 4.20. Finally, Nasi (which in Hebrew means 'prince') may be derived from the name Moses gave the altar he erected to God after his victory over Amalek, viz. Jehovah-Nissi.² Thomson quotes Montgomery, who follows Heidenheim, as giving instead of Nasi the name Zilpah (the same name as that of Leah's maid).

Little progress has been made up to now in understanding why the Samaritans, or at least some Samaritans, with their lack of hierarchy should mention names for angels at all, and particularly names whose origin seems nothing but the crassest nonsense! It is undoubtedly a mystery why these names should appear at all, and no final answer has been given to the problem. In general terms, i.e. within the norm of Samaritan belief, these names have no real signification. Until the subject of Samaritan Kabbala has been critically examined no light is likely to be cast on the problem. Certain

¹ *The Samaritans*, p. 189.

² Ex. 17.15.

strange notions about particular angels, chiefly about Kebala, are to be found even in the Liturgy, but it is to be noted that these are mediaeval. Their very rarity bespeaks their 'heterodox' nature. We can say with certainty that such expressions lie outside of definitive and representative Samaritanism. Every religion has its heterodox elements and Samaritanism is no exception, but it may be regarded as a tribute to it that such ideas are infrequent.¹

There seems to have been no belief in a hierarchy of angels, despite the statements of Thomson, although in such heterodox passages as may be referred to for this subject more prominence may have been given to Kebala. That there was no hierarchy in definitive Samaritanism coincides with the fact that angels in general are believed to be a class of spirit-like beings whose functions are fairly well defined.

All Samaritan writers would agree that the angels were intermediary between God and man, even if their exact relationship to the one or the other side of the veil was not ascertained. We have many passages to show that they were specially associated with Mount Gerizim, a belief that probably grew out of Jacob's experience at Bethel (Luza). Thus Abisha, in the spirit of the Defter Hymns, could write:

Let us set our stance in the place of the angels . . . who wait upon the mighty name (C. p. 488.22-24).

So in his great Dream Abisha saw them ascending and descending on the mountain. In the Samaritan exegesis of the Sinai theophany the angels were present *to witness* the tremendous events that were taking place, when man met God at the 'half-way house' between earth and heaven, namely Mount Gerizim as later identified according to the mystical interpretation of Sinai.

During the travels of the Hebrew tribes, angels, it was believed, gave them assistance. This notion finds warrant in the Law, where we read that 'the glory' of the Lord manifested itself. Angels are a part of the Glory and in the literature generally the Glory is usually associated in an integral way with the angelic hosts of heaven. According to Markah, these hosts assembled to aid Israel:

Where in the world is there a people of such great glory as Israel? Manifold wonders were done for their sake, manifold marvels by

¹ For such notions about angels in the Liturgy, see particularly C. pp. 430, 489 and 511 (all compositions of Abisha) in reference to Kebala and Peniel.

reason of them; and the assembly of the angels came to help them, and the great glory was manifested for the sake of their preservation (Memar II.3).

The frequent references from earliest times to 'angels, powers and principalities' (e.g. Markah, Defer, C. pp. 50, 56) may be compared with the current notions explicit in Enoch 61. 10; Rom. 8.38; Eph. 1.21; 6.12; Col. 2.15, etc.

The part played by the angels within the human scene is at most lacking in specific definition. Their relationship to Moses, of course, is more definite and direct, and this factor in itself could have led to the widening of the idea, until it was believed in time that the unseen hosts were ever present to support the elect nation. Markah certainly believed this. Usually the angels were believed to be inactive, but in connection with Moses, Markah believed that angels could be very active indeed. In comparing the entry of Moses into the Red Sea with that of Pharaoh, he wrote:

Moses entered and the angels ministered to him.¹

Pharaoh entered and the angels² punished him (Memar I.11).

It appears that Markah believed in a general way that the 'forces of the unseen', as he sometimes called them, gave aid to Israel by actively tending them or thwarting the efforts of their foes. This teaching did not, however, develop in normative Samaritanism, although it is always inherent in the writings of those mediaeval writers who discuss or refer to the subject. On the other hand, Abul Hasan had nothing to say about their active intervention in history, and according to his last statement, which we quoted earlier, no more was known in his day than that which he mentioned. He seems not to have taken up the teaching of Markah, and we may assume that Markah's belief about the active ministry of angels did not continue into mediaeval times. Yet belief in angels as a passive force,³ as far as the lower world is involved, certainly did continue and even develop, and we shall now take note of their chief functions in this context.

We have noted the presence of angels at the birth of Moses (probably a borrowing from Christianity), the appearance of angels at the cosmic scene of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, their

¹ Cf. Matt. 4.11.

² After the interpretation of Ex. 11.4f.

³ But with the exception of the belief, noted on p. 403 below, that an angel was actively involved at the lawgiving.

awaiting the arrival of Moses at his death and ascension. This 'activity' represents the true Samaritan beliefs about them, for their chief function, corporately speaking, was to be witnesses or even merely bystanders. In the same way it was believed that angels would be present as witnesses at the great Day of Judgement. Abdallah (C. p. 238) speaks of their witnessing God's judgement *on Mount Gerizim*. Here we have a typical mediaeval attitude, for by and large the witnessing angels are associated directly with the sacred mount, since it was the point of contact between the two worlds. Only in special conditions could angels manifest their activity elsewhere.

In connection with Mount Gerizim we have a belief that when worship is true the angels take cognizance of it. It seems that the Samaritans believed that men and angels are close to one another in the circumstances of true prayer and praise, as if to say that men are then in the highest state and therefore nearer to the level of the angels. It is not a thought peculiar to Samaritanism that at times of worship and praise the angels are present with the faithful, and indeed we may consider the possibility that the statement of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (12.1)

With all these *witnesses to faith* around us like a cloud, we must throw off . . .

expresses the same basic concept as the Samaritan following:

In the evening and morning the angels of the Lord are present wherever men pray; the angels of the Lord come round about, for it pleases the angels to hear the praises of their Lord at all times (C. p. 43.26-28).

This ancient Defter statement keeps us in the atmosphere of the lower world only to a degree, for it speaks of spiritual values and in reality the atmosphere is that of Mount Gerizim, where, and only where, prayer and praise are ultimately valid. There is another possibility that the Judaist and Christian belief about the basic role of angels in heaven as worshippers of God had some influence on the Samaritan outlook, but the localization of the angelic manifestations on the sacred mount places Samaritanism in a category of its own.

Markah likewise possibly reflects in this connection another New Testament statement, when he writes:

The angels were witness to what Moses would do, and they are all gathered in every place where God is mentioned in truth (Memar VI.3).

Remembering that 'truth' and 'name' are special synonyms for God in the Samaritan terminology, we may well wonder if the same essential principle is in evidence in Matt. 18.20:

For where two or three have met together in my name, I am there among them.

The essential principle would be that of the meeting of the two worlds in these 'other-worldly' occasions in human experience.

This leads to the second chief function of angels, as recorded in the literature generally. This, derived straight from the Law, was the function of conveying messages from God to man. In more anthropomorphic contexts such angels could manifest themselves in human form, but in later times of the Pentateuchal period the normal circumstance was that the angel should appear on God's behalf in certain supernormal conditions. So Moses encountered an angel at the burning bush. Abul Hasan gives this function of message delivery as one of the supreme angelic functions. According to Markah, such an angel was *sent* by God (Memar I.1) for the purpose of conveying his will. In mediaeval times, when efforts to avoid anthropomorphic expressions and descriptions had developed to the full, it was believed that even at the lawgiving on Sinai it was an angel who handed over the tablets to Moses.¹

The third function has to do with the celestial nature of the angels. They belonged *essentially* with God and existed for his glory.² As early as Defter times (C. p. 26) we read of Markah describing God as 'God of all angels'. Abul Hasan speaks of angels as being the only beings worthy of dwelling with God, and he asserts that no human could dwell with him. We shall have further occasion to speak about the angelic existence in the unseen.

It would seem fitting to end at this point, but some students of Samaritanism have seen fit to speak of evil angels in their articles and in their books. Such names of 'evil angels' as Azazel (Lev. 16.10), Belial (Deut. 13.13), Jasara (Deut. 7.20) and Mehablah³ do appear occasionally in Samaritan writings, but again it must be urged that the appearance of such names does not in any way mean that it was standard Samaritan practice to refer to them as objects

¹ So Abdallah, C. p. 508.

² Cf. Matt. 18.10.

³ Who is more correctly to be regarded as an angel, as we have seen.

of belief. As has been pointed out before, even the well-known biblical Azazel occurs only once in the huge Day of Atonement Liturgy, a clear indication of the Samaritan dislike of such belief. In this field the Samaritans have advanced beyond the Pentateuch.

Belial is a generic term, used widely throughout the ancient Near East, which occurs infrequently in some mediaeval writings. There is no significance in the use of such a name and there is no theological category involved. The Samaritans did not believe in any personified figure of evil standing opposite God.

The other names are so rare as not to deserve mention at all. No case can be made out for a Samaritan belief in evil angels or demons as an integral part of their system of belief.

XXI

THE AFTER-LIFE

My future abode is the seat of thy dominion, where there is neither sea¹, nor ocean nor heaven itself.²

MAN'S LIFE BEGAN in the Garden of Eden, and the last era of human life will be there, too. It has been said (in the *Hillukh*) that man lives in four worlds: (1) his mother's womb; (2) the earth; (3) the world between this world and the next; (4) the final world.³ This fourfold division of human life is not found throughout the literature of many periods, but it is illustrative in its second, third and fourth categories of the standard belief that there are two worlds, the earthly and the heavenly. We have, in connection with eschatological beliefs, observed something of the third category, and now we have to note the teaching of the Samaritans about the ultimate world. In order to introduce the conception of eternal life, it is necessary to prefix a short study of the invisible world, which is so directly connected with the 'world between this world and the next'.

The interesting thing is that this rather remarkable doctrine existed, almost fully developed, in the time of Markah. Both in his liturgical Hymns, where he was restricted in his freedom to convey his ideology, and in his *Memar* he has much to say about the distinction between the visible and invisible worlds. The only problem for the modern student of his teaching is whether he regarded the invisible world as 'the world between this world and the next' or as 'the next world', i.e. the final paradise for righteous men. We shall observe the problem stage by stage as we go and take note of how Samaritan teaching finally evolved in this direction.

The chief distinction between this world, the visible, and the

¹ Cf. Rev. 21.1.

² *Carmina Samaritana*, 3.13.

³ Gaster, *Oral Law*, pp. 133f.

invisible is their separateness as entities. The Dustan statement, already quoted, that the former is for the use of mortals and the latter for the use of angels seems to be a comment on Gen. 1.1 and so we may justifiably conclude that 'heaven' is the domain of angels, 'earth' of mortals. But Samaritan thinking does not regard the earth as destructible in any final sense, for it regards a remnant of it as enduring for ever. We have observed that this means that out of the destruction caused by the fire in the time of the cataclysm and judgement one part of the earth remains inviolate. That is Mount Gerizim, identified throughout all periods of the literature as the Garden of Eden. The imagery employed to describe the sacred mount as an eternal and indestructible place is borrowed from that used in the Book of Exodus to describe the Sinai theophany, and we would be right in assuming that all Samaritan ideas about the invisible world had their warrant if not their origin in that part of the Pentateuch. Once belief in an after-life had become accepted as received doctrine—and we do not know when this may have happened—it was perhaps natural to regard Mount Gerizim, 'the eternal hill', the mountain of revelation after Sinai, as the point of entry into the invisible. Jacob's dream, telling of the location of God's House, and the Sinai imagery gave the necessary body to a developed description of the mystical mount, on which is found the veil that separates the two worlds. Most Samaritans are content with this belief, but some see in the 'in-between world', the invisible world, but an introduction to the real world of eternity.

The use of the terms 'seen' and 'unseen' was no doubt an attempt to explain

the old, old difficulty as to the way in which God or the soul can have any relation with matter.¹

Cowley goes on to suggest that the simple division between the two was enough for Markah, but is this really true? This is the important point in our enquiry here, for the ultimate question is whether the Samaritans as early as Markah's day differentiated between the invisible world and the after-life. Where did the vindicated righteous go when they were led to the Garden? To Mount Gerizim, on which the judgement took place? Or to some unseen, invisible world? Those who had passed to the after-life were certainly not inactive, memory-less, shadowy creatures like those in the Sheol of the Old

¹ Cowley, *JQR* 8, p. 572.

Testament. There was plenty of activity and everything savoured, according to the teaching, of reality. Whither, then, the rewarded elect?

We must indicate some aspects of Samaritan belief about the invisible world before turning to more advanced concepts about the Garden of Eden than we have previously set forth. It is closely bound up with the visible world within the cosmic whole. What is done on earth has its repercussions in the invisible. The angels of the latter are 'present' at the prayers of men; they witness the great events in Israel's history. Likewise, according to Markah, the invisible combines with the visible in reaction to tremendous events.

When Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, things invisible and visible trembled (Memar II.5).

The likely explanation of Markah's statement is that, on the analogy of Mount Sinai where the same phenomenon occurred, mortals and immortals alike responded in fear and awe to the tremendous events of Israel's salvation. Even more closely related to the visible, the invisible world seems to penetrate the visible in the same connection.

(Moses and Aaron) entered Egypt . . . and the Good One was with them in the unseen, invisible (Memar I.4).

Similarly, Samaritan teaching about the aid of the invisible includes the activity of the pillars of fire and cloud during Israel's wanderings. This was literally the interpenetration of the visible and invisible planes within the context of cosmic events.

The invisible is much more extensive than the visible. One aspect of this belief is found in Markah's Defter Hymns, where he states:

Thy riches in the unseen world are greater than those in the seen (C. p. 18.7).

Of these riches of God's storehouse are the miracles that were performed. In the passage now quoted from the Memar we have clear indication of the indebtedness of the Samaritan writers to the imagery used to describe the Sinai theophany.

Moses drew near to the holy, deep darkness, where the Divine One was, and he saw the wonders of the unseen—a sight no one else could see! (VI.3).

The angels properly belong there. In the account of the theophany it is stated over and over again in a great variety of ways that 'Moses

dwelt with the angels' when he penetrated the veil between the two worlds. These angels are possessed of special knowledge, quite different from that of mortals. Abul Hasan even goes so far as to say that 'they are the most learned of all creatures' and explains this as due to the fact that they are not composite as men are. Abul Hasan gives as the biblical warrant for the belief in their dwelling 'in the high heavens' the verse Deut. 26.15.

One mortal had their kind of knowledge and he was Moses. When he experienced the meeting with God on Mount Sinai he not only dwelt with the angels and 'shared their food' (which according to Abul Hasan cannot mean physical victuals); Moses thought as they thought and his knowledge, like theirs, was part of the gift of wisdom, and indeed all men who have wisdom are capable of 'knowing' the invisible and communing with Moses 'in the unseen'.

In their celestial life the angels minister to God. This is also a belief found in Judaism and Christianity. But it appears that in the mediaeval era it came to be acceptable practice to speak of the Israelites in the after-life as angels. The High Priest Abisha certainly believed that the angels and the Hebrews of the hereafter became as one in order of being. Thus

The angels of the Lord were standing there, these being the priests, the ministers of his sanctuary (C. p. 430.19).

Abisha goes on to speak of them as 'noble ones of the lofty and glorious one, ascending and descending [as in Jacob's dream] and making supplication to God'.

We cannot here enter into the problem of the identification of the ultimate elect with angels, because there are too few passages relating to the identification; it is enough to observe the more typical belief of all periods that the main occupation of the angels (whether or not they were an expanded number) was the worship and service of God.

Finally in these general remarks about the nature of the invisible world, we note, as we have had occasion to do elsewhere, that it is there that the pattern of all things is to be found. The sanctuary in particular is singled out by dozens of writers as having its *real* origin and state in the invisible. When Moses was on Mount Sinai and 'reached through the deep darkness into the unseen' he saw the 'model' or reality of all things, and thereafter he was able to dictate the form of the sanctuary.

In what sense did the Samaritans mean 'real'? A good illustration from the Day of Atonement Liturgy is

... the Day of Vengeance and Recompense, a day . . . when the world will seem like a dream, after which comes the remembering of it (C. p. 499.11-12).

According to Abisha (C. p. 509), true life is what he calls 'the second world'. He distinguishes the 'first world' as merely good, the 'second world' as (real) life.

The reality of the invisible world is expressed also in terms of its being the *source* of all creation, and hence, in a sense, the *primaeva* fire emanates from there during creation, but little is said about this in any specific way. However, some things are said quite explicitly, even as early as Markah's writing. For example, he speaks in the Memar (IV.1) of the invisible world as the place of the Glory, the angels, light, darkness, air, fire, water, foundations, the two luminaries and the stars.

Not only the foundations (origins) of what became created things, but true spiritual values also have their origin in this invisible realm. God is 'merciful and gracious in this world and in the next' (C. p. 659, etc.). In many an individual petition the expression 'Have compassion for me in both worlds' is used, e.g. by Ab Gelugah.

An interesting problem, apparently not answered by the Samaritans, is whether the souls of the dead live in the invisible world until the resurrection. There are many passages that seem to suggest this. Because of their abundance we may include a note on the possible belief in the repository of souls (temporarily?) in the invisible. Such common expressions as 'The living praise thee, the dead honour thee' (C. p. 9) seem to suggest, within their context, that the dead live on, in the sense that their souls are not unresponsive to what is going on. Thus Moses is often thought of as having continued 'life' between his burial on Mount Nebo and his reappearance as the Taheb and again at the judgement as the intercessor.

At any rate, in the latest literature the belief is fixed; speaking of the prophets (=the righteous who spoke for God) of the Lord, the Malef (124) asserts:

Their spirits are gathered together in one place. The mystery about their spirits is that they go about like the angels of the Lord, having a spirit but no body. This will take place during the interval between this world and the Day of Vengeance.

In the eighteenth-century liturgical writings, too, the same sort of belief in the unseen world 'housing' the souls of the departed is found in connection with unborn souls. Muslim b. Murjan calls the unseen world the 'Soul World'.

Born out of the world of souls into this world (C. p. 318.3-4).

We may conclude from these sketchy remarks that the Samaritans did not come to any final decision about the souls of the dead, at least before the modern period. We turn now to the question of the nature of heaven more precisely. At once we have no hesitation in identifying heaven with the Garden of Eden, as we have noted above.¹ According to Abdallah the Garden is in 'the fourth heaven' (C. p. 431). Since there are seven heavens in all (nine according to one tradition),² we may take it that the Garden is not all that close to the ultimate reality of God's 'lofty habitation' in the seventh heaven.³ The only descriptions of life in the Garden that we have suggest that it is ideal life, though hardly ultimate despite its perfect bliss. Perhaps the reason for ascribing to the Garden a status lower than the ultimate was simply that the Samaritans could not bring themselves to identify the status of the righteous elect with that of God. This we can understand.

Know that the state of those who will dwell hereafter in the Garden of Eden will be like that of Adam's. They will live there like the angels of heaven in splendour and glory, clad in the light. . . .

This is the belief of the community of the Israelites, the Samaritans who keep the truth faithfully, concerning Eden and those who dwell therein.

Thus we have the picture of bliss as given in the *Hillukh*. There are many such descriptions scattered throughout the literature, and we may draw attention to some of the most typical. The Sabbath Liturgy provides the following picture; though speaking of Sabbath and the Law, the imagery employed gives us some insight into the ideal life:

¹ For the Garden of Eden as the abode of the blessed in the New Testament see Luke 23.43, and cf. II Cor. 12.3 and Rev. 2.7.

² E.g. the *Malef* (7). According to this seven of these nine are levels in the firmament of moving stars. The eighth firmament is that of the fixed stars, the ninth the encompassing blue sky. Presumably God can still dwell in the seventh heaven. Cf. also Judaist ideas in Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* III, p. 117. For Judaist traditions that there are ten or nine heavens, see *op. cit.* I, 130.

³ For the Judaist tradition that God dwells in the seventh heaven, see, e.g., Babylonian Talmud, Hagiga 13a.

How beautiful is heaven! The whole assembly therein are light; all who dwell in it are radiant. It is wholly bright from the light of eternal life (C. p. 51.23-24).

It is obvious that we have here a statement inferring that Eden is less than the ultimate heaven, for its light is a lesser manifestation of the ultimate light. The latter is the manifestation of the final source of all things in the domain of God. Eternal life from that domain fills the Garden, just as the light radiates upon all the inhabitants of the Garden.

Evidence has already been provided in different connections, particularly in connection with the Sabbath experience, that the Samaritans as early as Markah's day came to regard the term 'Eden' as a near ultimate, a high perfect thing. Anything regarded as being at such a level could be compared to Eden, or even called Eden! So Sabbath experience is a sort of 'life in Eden'.¹ The Durran (C. p. 44) speaks of the Sabbath as an eternal Eden, while Markah in the Defter uses metaphors to emphasize the unique status of the Law:

(The two tablets) are in Eden, bringing life to those who drink therefrom, an Eden whose source is from eternal life (C. p. 23.26).

It is not surprising, therefore, that Markah and many who followed him should speak of the unseen as the Garden of Eden. It was, after all, the home of the pattern of things on earth, indeed the ultimate source of reality. Just as we have seen, Moses penetrated the unseen when he experienced the Sinai theophany, so Markah writes:

The gates of the Garden were opened for him; within the Garden he dwelt (Memar IV.3).

Markah identified the invisible world with the Garden. Both are described as 'the primaeval city' that existed from the first moment of creation. Pristine and pure man lived in that city and will live in it again.

Our study is complicated by the fact that Mount Gerizim in the Second Kingdom is also identified as the site of the Garden of Eden, but many passages speak of the Garden as heaven *in the life following* the Day of Vengeance. The Samaritans themselves were obviously confused on this point. All we can say with any certainty is that the future reward in the Garden refers to two stages, one in the Second

¹ Cf. the Judaist tradition in Aboth Rabbi Nathan 1.8.

Kingdom prior to the judgement, and the other, the ultimate, in the era after the judgement. The idea of divine favour for Israel applies to both realms. We are obliged to differentiate between the Second Kingdom and the after-life, hence the assigning of a separate chapter to each subject. The present writer would urge one argument in favour of his differentiation between the life of favour in the Second Kingdom and the life of favour in the unseen world. This is simply that it would seem unlikely that the righteous, having been vindicated on the Day of Vengeance and Recompense, would pass into the Garden of Eden as their final bliss if they had already been experiencing the life of favour *in the world* in the Second Kingdom. Surely a bliss higher than in the era before the judgement might be expected! The Samaritan sources are undoubtedly confusing, but our reconstruction seems to explain what statements we have for study.

Writing for the Passover Liturgy, Ben Manir speaks of the light and the tree of life in one of his poems about the Garden, final descriptions of which now occupy our attention.¹

Those who have not seen the Garden of Eden shall on this Passover night see a light which radiates from Eden; the tree of life abides in it (C. p. 179.20-21).

The light here mentioned is still not the light supreme; that would be in the seventh heaven. Eden is in the fourth. But it is light at a very high degree of manifestation and has in itself a radiance beyond the degree of light's manifestation in the world. Life and light are frequently associated by the Samaritans, very much in the manner of the Johannine literature of the New Testament. No attempt seems to have been made to connect the tree of life with the light of God, but God's light and wisdom are often related, and likewise the tree of life with the tree of knowledge (wisdom).² Those who live in the Garden of Eden have more than life; they have the light of life.³ They are frequently described as being possessed of wisdom (cf. the higher degree of this attributed to the angels). The imagery of the 'living waters', again typical of the Johannine literature, is used more than any other with regard to the wisdom of the inhabitants of the Garden.

¹ Rabbinic tradition in Judaism distinguished in the main between the Messianic age and the world to come. See, e.g., R. Stewart, *Rabbinic Theology*, p. 50.

² For the city and the tree of life in Johannine literature see Rev. 22.1-2.

³ Cf. John 1.4; 8.12.

All his waters are living waters. All who are satisfied from them have life, and all who eat of his fruit shall enter the Garden of Eden (C. p. 496.15-16).

Such is the type of the inhabitants of Eden. What they did on earth they shall do in heaven. In some mediaeval passages 'living waters' and 'bread' or 'fruit' occur in the form 'wine' and 'living bread'. In any case we seem to have a Christian-type metaphor in use; those who drink and eat, according to Abisha, shall enter the fullness of life in the Garden.

A signal feature of the inhabitants is that they have 'the image that descended from Adam'. This refers to the true, uncorrupted form of pristine man. Thus the denizens of Eden after the judgement will be the type of Adam before the fall. 'From God we came; to God we shall return', a typical expression, contains the same thought of return to the original state as an essential feature of God's plan. In late passages the attempt is made to make the 'new man' a sort of angelic figure. The Malef does this by regarding Adam as one of the 'prophets' (the modern expression for 'the righteous'). After describing the raiment of the 'holy prophets', the Malef (124) states:

All who dwell in Eden shall be like them and just like the angels,¹ whose service is the rendering of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. They shall neither sin nor be ill; they shall neither suffer affliction, nor shall they sleep,² nor shall there be marital relationship among them.³

What do the inhabitants of heaven do? Certainly the Garden is regarded as a place of rest—hence the Sabbath analogy—but apparently not merely in the sense of 'cessation from toil'; the implication is that rest will be more in the nature of relaxation and freedom from care. Some passages speak of 'room to inspire', freedom to enjoy God, opportunity to serve God in a wider sphere. Those passages which speak of rest from labour as a reward for the righteous usually have a context of pain and sorrow for the toils of this world. Thus wishful thinking, in the best sense of the phrase, leads to the hope of rest in the after-life. However, these passages are not the final word. Others speak of the worship, the celebration of the high Festivals, the singing of praises to God in the Garden. Here is a picture of Israel's future activity:

¹ Cf. the latter expression in Mark 12.25; Matt. 22.30.

² Cf. the picture of the saints in Rev. 7.16.

³ As note 1.

Come over into the Garden of Eden and see what is in the midst of it! Behold what resides therein—Israel abiding in security . . . the Overseer watching over them. The Lord's cloud is upon the Overseer . . . enveloping him as he comes, wearing the ephod and breastplate. In that day he brings out the sacred scroll. The High Priest gives the blessing and the people say Amen!¹

Such a picture could also apply to life in the Second Kingdom, and it is not possible to say for certain to which era it belongs.

The Overseer is Moses, Man of God; he ministers in conjunction with the High Priest to preserve the true worship in eternity. Perhaps the last word about Moses in the after-life (many descriptions of him being applicable to the Taheb in the Second Kingdom) is spoken by Abisha (C. p. 379) when he speaks of

The great prophet glorified, sitting on the throne, there to judge and live for ever.²

The parallels in some of these quotations and like passages to the imagery of Christ in the heavenly realm are obvious. Yet so few passages refer to Moses explicitly as a sort of 'great High Priest in heaven' that we cannot regard this aspect of life in Paradise as fully received into the doctrine. Montgomery's statement:

He (Moses) is rather like the Christ of Christianity, one whose origin is often held to be mysterious, who now lives to make intercession for his brethren,³

is misleading in that what he asserts is outside the framework of the evolved religion, and belongs rather to the sphere of Eastern Samaritanism's borrowings from Latin Christianity.

Our final assessment of Samaritanism's view of the after-life follows that of other concepts. It is largely parallel to or derived or developed from the New Testament teaching. Elements common to Judaism in the inter-Testamental period are to be found; e.g. the imagery of the Garden of Eden. Perhaps the most important thing about the Samaritan conception of the after-life is that it is *eternal* life. Many of the features of the Revelation of St John appear, as we have seen in other studies. Of these are found the 'crown of life', 'the tree of life', 'pillar(s) of the temple', 'entrance into the city' and the like. Similarly reward and recompense follow the main

¹ See further the Commentary on Chronicle I (Asatir X.12), where the old tradition is set out that Balaam had visions of Israel in Paradise.

² Cf. Mark 16.19 and other passages.

³ *The Samaritans*, p. 225.

themes of the Book of the Revelation, with its picture of 'a new earth', 'a new heaven', and 'the lake of fire' for the unrighteous. Not every aspect of the teaching of the Johannine Apocalypse appears, but the chief differences between the mediaeval Samaritan concept (based largely but not wholly on Markah) and the Johannine are differences of detail rather than of major themes. We may say with confidence that if it had not been for Christian ideology about the expectation of the after-life, Samaritanism would have been almost barren in this regard. Having not assimilated or incorporated the rather gross features of many Judaist and some early Christian imagery, Samaritanism in the end developed a picture of the new life in the Garden which is spiritual and ideal. What the Samaritan hopes for is perfection of life, perfection of life in a new world, where all those things that prevented true worship on earth will be absent.

In the latest level of the religious literature Christian-type imagery became standard usage.

They shall be in tranquillity, in pleasure unwearying, in joy without grief. In the Garden there shall be neither winter cold nor summer heat, and all the time there shall be a great unfading light . . . delight unending in praise and hymns, prayers and extollation. The holy spirit shall caress them and they shall drink delightful drink (Malef 191).¹

Finally, in remembering the deceased, benedictions of many sorts are used, but the typical expression of the hope for the future of one's loved ones is as follows, where the scribe speaks on behalf of the composer:

May the name of the composer ever be remembered for his mercy. His Lord *grant a place in the Garden of Eden* to him who was Amram, known as the priest . . . I, his son, Solomon . . . am bereaved. I beseech my Lord by the meritorious ones and the most select prophet to forgive him all sin. . . . May he join me with him in his mercy, in glory and new life. May we see him there by the prayers of the elect of all the world (C. p. 205.8-12).

¹ For the convenience of readers interested in the similarity between the Samaritan and Book of Revelation imagery, the following references may prove helpful: (1) no sun: Rev. 7.16; 21.23; 22.5; (2) quenching of thirst: 7.17; 21.6; (3) rest from labour: 14.13; (4) no more affliction: 21.4; (5) city on mountain at level below God's heaven: 21.10; (6) no temple in heaven (the Samaritans do not speak of a temple there): 21.22; (7) a great light: 21.23; 22.5; (8) the tree of life: 22.2; 22.14; (9) no darkness: 22.5.

Just as vengeance and recompense are themes of the Book of Revelation, so the picture of bliss for the people whose record enables them to be assessed as righteous is closely like the Samaritan.

PART SIX

SAMARITANISM ASSESSED

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

NO PROPER ASSESSMENT of Samaritanism is possible unless due consideration is had for the undoubted influence of Christianity, its teaching and traditions, both in its early and mediaeval forms. One thesis of this book has been that Samaritanism is Northern Israelite religion developed, modified and substantially expanded with the aid of Christianity. It is hoped that enough parallels of thought and expression have been pointed out for this religious phenomenon to have been proved. Samaritanism is not a form of Judaism; it is no heterodox religion. It is a development of one religion with the aid of the ideology of another.

In order to demonstrate the prominence of Christian influence and the form of Samaritanism's 'christology', this final part of the book is divided into two chapters. The first chapter draws together the christological parallels and serves as a recapitulation and a reminder, before some general assessment of Samaritanism is made by way of a conclusion.

XXII

MOSES AND CHRIST

If you believed Moses you would believe what I tell you, for it was about me that he wrote.¹

THE NEW TESTAMENT far from ignores the place of honour held by Moses in the estimation of the people of the time. How far Jesus was conscious of the Samaritans' high esteem and veneration for Moses we do not know, for he may have been thinking merely of the regard of the Judaists, for whom also Moses was a figure of supreme importance, though hardly to the degree of the Samaritan veneration. However, it is more than possible that the Samaritan outlook is represented in St John's writings and especially in his Gospel, the Gospel that, of the four, shows greatest interest in the Samaritans. The writer certainly knew about the Samaritans and their beliefs, witness chapter 4 of the Gospel.

If New Testament writers knew something of the Samaritans, then the Samaritans were equally acquainted with the beliefs of the early Christians. In this special chapter we shall see how influential those beliefs were to be in the early centuries of the Christian era on the thinking of the Samaritans. It was in St John's Gospel *par excellence* that they were to find apparently so much that either paralleled their own doctrinal leanings or presented them with ideas, not already matured in Samaria, that permitted much of their own doctrine to develop still further from the biblical basis. We have noted many such parallels and in this chapter we shall have occasion to note others. It will be seen that the Synoptic Gospels (Mark rather rarely) influenced, or seem to have influenced, the Samaritans in two directions: firstly, the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke, with their 'special sources', provided material for the later descriptions of the birth of Moses; secondly, the Sermon on the Mount, or ethical teaching of Jesus generally, in Matt. 5-7 offered teaching that the

¹ John 5.46.

Samaritans could value. St John's Gospel can be quoted scores of times as proof of the dependence of the Samaritans. There is nothing to suggest that it was the latter who influenced the former, though this is not entirely impossible!

The affinities of the Epistle to the Hebrews with the Samaritan teachings are in some respects so close that it is not an irresponsible act to suggest that the Epistle was written to Samaritan Christians. Was not Jesus' first success *in a community* in Samaria? Were not the Samaritans the only Palestinian community with a living priesthood?

Some parts of the Pauline Epistles seem to have provided ideas that the Samaritans could use, but, of course, both St Paul's teachings and Markah's show Gnostic-type affinities, and they may both have inherited the same ideological background to some extent. In all this we must recall our earlier assertion that the Samaritans, consciously or unconsciously, used Christian material only where there could be found a biblical base for it.

At the risk of repetition, let us again ask the question: How well did the Samaritans know the Christian literature? Did they know it from mere hearsay, or from the Judaists, or from a closer contact? We can at once say three things about this. (1) They were able to retain in cases almost verbal accuracy when they incorporated New Testament material. (2) They lived right in the centre of an area of Christian controversies, and the Bishop of Sebaste (Samaria) actually attended the vital Council of Nicaea in the very century of Baba Rabba's great revivalist movement. The second-century Christian writer Justin Martyr came from Samaria. (3) Chronicle II, in its section dealing with the Roman era, lists the four Gospels, the Epistles of St Paul (both lists complete with dates), and no less than thirty-five uncanonical 'gospels', some of which have only recently become known to scholars.

Yes, the Samaritans were certainly interested in and knowledgeable about the Christians and their literature. The chief problem for us is to date the Samaritan literature more exactly; yet we have every reason to be sure that the writers of the Roman era did write at least a century and a half, possibly two centuries, after the writing of the Fourth Gospel. This was certainly long enough for a slow and gradual process of assimilation from Christianity. We need not argue that they deliberately copied from the Christian literature. This would be a totally uncritical attitude to adopt. Before we turn to the

chief parallels between the Christian teaching about Christ and the Samaritan about Moses, it must be repeated with emphasis that the Samaritans adopted new notions or gave assent to new formulations when these helped in the development of notions and formulations already existing and traceable to sound biblical warrant, even if the process of exegesis involved would hardly satisfy modern critical methods. This statement certainly is justified as regards the Roman era. For the mediaeval we may at times find the above assertion hard to believe, but even then we have to allow for centuries of gradual development, so that the development of any doctrine strongly coloured by Christian ideology represents a long process of gradual adoption.

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The amount of close parallelism involved in the remainder of this chapter is sufficiently great for us to divide it into sections, beginning with quotations from Samaritan and Christian literature describing the pre-existent state of Moses and Christ respectively. It will be for the reader to determine for himself whether all the parallels set out are indeed close, but let it be borne in mind that even when some parallels are not close there is still substantial accumulative evidence. Added to this is the fact that in most of the examples there is no similar parallelism between Samaritanism and representative Judaism of the same period.

No claim is made in this book, the first of its kind, that all parallels between the New Testament and the Samaritan literature have been worked out. The purpose in this chapter is less ambitious. After all, a whole book could be written on the basis of material available for the comparison between the saviours of the two faiths. Our concern is to set out in brief the chief, clearly warranted parallels, taking note of the tremendous importance of the Johannine writings in this connection.

The New Testament interest in Moses as a subject for comparison with Jesus may be quoted from the words of Heb. 3.5f.:

Moses, then, was faithful as a servitor in God's whole household; his task was to bear witness to the words that God would speak; but Christ is faithful as a son, set over his household.

When we compare the status of and historical events attributed to the two chief personages of the two religions, we have to remember that, Samaritans apart, there are parallels in any case. There are

obvious parallels between the account of Moses' birth and that of Jesus and the effects that these both brought about in their immediate environment. As Pharaoh was afraid, so was Herod; both did awful deeds because of their fear. There are many such biblical parallels that we may take for granted here. For all we know the early Christian comparing of Jesus with Moses stimulated similar activity among the Samaritans. Our task is the observing of the distinctive parallels between New Testament and early and mediaeval Samaritan literature as far as Jesus and Moses respectively are concerned. We shall not repeat those we have already indicated, but merely mention them by way of recapitulation, and proceed to fuller description of those we have not found it necessary so far to allude to, but even here we shall quote briefly, allowing the cumulative effect of the parallelism to be the focal point of judgement.

THE PRE-EXISTENT FIGURE

Both were described as the Word (Logos) of God. The statements about Christ in the writings of St John can be almost exactly paralleled on this subject. Moses was with God in the beginning (cf. 1.1); through him all things came to be and without him was not anything made that was made (cf. 1.3). This Word was the real light that enlightens every man; it came into the world, but the world did not recognize him (cf. 1.9-11). This same Word brought about creation (cf. 1.3). He who understands the divine Word (which the Samaritans relate to the divine name revealed through Moses) knows all that is made and renewed by it (cf. 1.3). If it had not been for Moses the world would not have been created.

On this subject the early Samaritan and the Johannine views agree more or less exactly. We have noted, too, the relationship between the Logos and the light of God. The light of Moses, we see, enlightens, illumines and illuminates every man, though men may not respond to the light. In the earthly context, deriving from the celestial, Moses like Christ is called the 'light of the world'. We have close parallels, amounting almost to quotations, to John 1.4, 9; 3.19; 5.35; 8.12; 9.5; 12.46 and other passages. The light that enlightens men seeks that men should believe in God; so John 12.46 and cf. Rev. 21.23f.

The eternal nature of the Word, the light of the world, is evidenced in many ways. Both Jesus and Moses are 'the first and the last' (cf. Rev. 1.17; 2.8; 22.13); both were in the beginning with God and

both will be present at the final judgement. Both have eternal life to offer those who believe in them (cf. John 3.16; 6.39f.). Both function as 'Spokesman' for God (the Word) in an eternal sense. Moses is the prophet of the two worlds, who gives life to those who believe. Jesus is 'that living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread he shall live for ever' (John 6.51). Thus both came from heaven and give life on earth and for all eternity. For this purpose both were *raised up* by God. The commission to Jesus and Moses is very similar, since both came to bring men to eternal life and eternal life to men.

In order to carry out their mission, both had to give up some of their celestial status and had to live within the confines of human life. The process of *kenosis* was necessary in both cases.

Both had to be born into the world in the manner that all men are born of women, though the supernormal element in the birth made it far from normal. The mediaeval Samaritans certainly tried to explain the birth of Moses along the lines of the Christian tradition, so that Moses like Jesus was born, not by the will of the flesh, but by the will of God.

THE HISTORICAL LIFE

The birth stories of Jesus and Moses present close parallels, as we have noted. In both a star appeared; in both angels were present to rejoice at the advent of the Saviour of the world. Throughout the earthly life of each, angels ministered to the apostle of God (cf. Mark 1.13, etc.).

Both were in communion (or communication) with God throughout their life and both were equipped with special powers 'from the power of God'. Thus miracles play an important role (*a*) as signs of the divine origin of their mission, (*b*) as means of bringing men to belief in God. For example, Moses 'stilled' the sea (cf. Mark 4.39). In an interesting passage from the Passover Liturgy we read the following, not all of it derived directly from the Pentateuchal narratives:

O the memories of the wonders that Moses and Aaron performed in Egypt! . . . Moses changed a rod into a serpent before stubborn Pharaoh, but the Egyptians denied him and said, 'Who made him *the anointed one, who raises the dead?*' (C. p. 182.25f.)

Much more could be said by way of comparison between Moses and Jesus as miracle workers, for example in the two incidents of turning water red—Moses the Nile water, Jesus the water into wine.

It is enough to observe the principle of the apostle specially empowered to exercise control over nature. Both are possessed of the power and wisdom of God (cf I Cor. 1.24).

Both are called 'apostle' (Heb. 3.1), both are thought of as 'anointed one',¹ as 'saviour', as 'lawgiver'. Both are described as 'the way' (John 14.6) and in the case of Moses 'the gateway to the truth'. The thought is the same, though not stressed in Samaritanism until the mediaeval era, that the divinely appointed apostle is the 'means' of approach to God. Thus in both religions mystical communion with the apostle of God was regarded as an invaluable, even necessary, means of reaching unto God.

The Johannine account of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman speaks of 'living water' (4.10), an expression which, with the same connotation, was a favourite of Markah and many later writers. The mystical idea of 'living water' (the Semitic meaning almost certainly being 'water of life', i.e. 'water that gives life') found in other parts of the Johannine literature (e.g. Rev. 22.1, 17) is connected with the Word. The apostle of God brings life, eternal life; this is a fundamental aspect of the mission of Moses, as of Jesus, leading to the further belief that men may find life through him long after his 'return' to God.

There are various events in the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels that found a place in the Samaritan version of the life of Moses, though mainly in mediaeval traditions. In the introductory account of the first stage of the earthly mission we have parallels that we have not had occasion to take note of before. There are two close parallels to the relative status of John the Baptist and Jesus. One of these comes from the pen of Abdallah in the Tabernacles Liturgy; the sun is made to say:

(My light is subdued by his light. Before me the light was prepared for him (C. p. 749.17-18).

There is, of course, the possibility of mere coincidence of thought, hardly of expression, but on the whole, keeping in mind the overall similarity of thought about the apostles of the two faiths, we may well regard this and the next quotation as arising from New Testament influence. The first quotation (above) is to be compared with John 1.15, the next with John 3.30:

(Moses) you shall increase, not decrease.

¹ Samaritan writers prefer to say 'appointed', probably avoiding the Judaist belief in the 'anointed' of the Lord.

Ben Manir, who was responsible for this quotation in the Day of Atonement Liturgy, was perhaps more influenced by the New Testament than any other writer of the fourteenth century.

In Samaritanism a great deal of importance is attached to the fasting of Moses for forty days and nights. The Samaritan account is a paraphrase of Deut. 10.10, and it is to be noted that the New Testament account of the fasting of Jesus in Matt. 4.1-11 shows dependence on the same passage from Deuteronomy. The answers given by Jesus to the tempter are all from Deuteronomy (8.3; 6.16; 6.13). The significance attached to the event in both religions is concerned with the struggle between the divine origin of the apostle and his human limitations and failings. Both, it is said, were tempted and both succeeded in overcoming temptation. Since readers are well acquainted with the Temptation narrative recorded in the Gospels and with the various exegeses that have been offered, it will suit our purpose best to set out the apparently similar Samaritan account of Moses' temptation. It will be seen that the Samaritan account is far from identical, but there is obvious dependence on the Christian tradition.

The Samaritan account (e.g. C. pp. 366f.) occurs in the fourteenth-century Dream of Abisha, one of the most significant pieces of Samaritan religious literature of the Silver Age in literary composition, and we shall have occasion below to compare part of the Dream with part of the Revelation of St John. Abisha was a High Priest and as such, according to Samaritan belief, was possessed of unique knowledge *from Moses*. In his account of his dream he informs his readers of his responsibility to convey to them what he has been taught by Moses. This he does after telling the story of what he saw. His vision finds its setting on Mount Gerizim (cf. the New Testament narrative) and the principal details are 'borrowed', whether deliberately for literary purposes or unconsciously from the store of his religious and spiritual knowledge we cannot say, from various biblical passages, one of these being the Exodus story of the Sinai theophany, another the Genesis story of Jacob's dream at Bethel, and another, apparently, from the story of the temptation of Jesus.

His account begins with the fast of Moses—for forty days and nights—from Deut. 10.10, with which we compare the beginning of the story of Christ's temptation in Matt. 4.2. Right from the start of Abisha's Dream, however, there is one significant element of the New Testament account missing. For the Samaritans, unlike Judaism

and Islam, have no demonology; there could be no cosmic or other force in opposition to God. Thus the Abisha story differs from the Christian to that extent. Various details of the New Testament account are included in Abisha's. For one thing, Moses is called, as he rarely is elsewhere, 'this great King, Moses' (cf. Matt. 4.8f.). The ascription to Moses of the title 'son of his House' in this story appears also to have significance. We have already noted that this ascription may connote an adoption belief; if so, Abisha makes use of it here, giving us a point of comparison with the second element in the Matthean account (4.3f.). In this connection it is possibly significant that Markah quotes Deut. 8.3 as Matthew does; Markah refers to it as part of the teaching of Moses.

A further point of comparison lies in Abisha's statement that 'I AM has given you the world', a message conveyed by the angels whom Abisha saw in his dream; these angels on the top of the mountain (cf. the Bethel experience of Jacob) had seen Moses coming up the mountain (Sinai) and had enquired of one another who this might be.

What is this? One of the sons of men coming up to us?

In the Gospel story (4.8f.) Jesus is promised all the kingdoms of the world. In the Samaritan account it is not the Devil, but God through his angels who gives Moses the supreme position (of being among the angels). Indeed, Abisha goes on to emphasize the nature of the reward by saying:

God said: 'Let him be raised up! Let him be exalted above all mankind!'

Thus there is a significant difference between the two accounts at this point. Christianity could not have been what it is if Jesus had accepted the reward offered him. Such dominion could hardly be further from what he was commissioned to possess! In the Samaritan system Moses can 'rule' the world, though not as a despot or earthly king. His rule is spiritual. Of course, Jesus does ultimately become 'king' and 'Lord', but not on the basis of the temptation story. Jesus' lordship, like that of the Samaritan Moses, comes from God.

Moses is made judge of the world in Abisha's story, but this element undoubtedly derives from the Pentateuchal account of Moses judging the people (Ex. 18).

Moses, we are next informed, 'sat upon the throne', praised and exalted, served by 'the elements', a symbol of the subservience of the

cosmos to him. Here we may compare Matthew's remark at the end of the temptation story that 'angels appeared and waited on him'—precisely the picture painted by Abisha in different colours! The description of Moses seated upon a heavenly throne reminds us of the New Testament picture of Jesus seated at the right hand of God. The next detail presented by Abisha is that Moses on the throne received '(spiritual) food from the glorious name', which is a Samaritan way of describing 'bread from heaven' with its full mystical import. Now this last item reflects the story of the manna in the wilderness, and again in the New Testament the physical bread from heaven and the spiritual bread of heaven are compared; so John 6.30f., a passage that undoubtedly interested the Samaritans greatly. Their exegesis of the Pentateuch is often set out in the manner of John 6.30f., the concept of physical and spiritual analogies being a characteristic feature of the Samaritan outlook.

We have done no more than draw attention to some New Testament statements about Jesus, which may well have influenced the account of Abisha, which is directed to the glorification of Moses at Sinai (mystically transferred to Gerizim). The beginning of both accounts is the fast of forty days and nights and the end is the glorification, which is described as Jesus/Moses being waited upon by angels. Thus both begin with the denial of the physical claims and end with spiritual reward.

Another incident connected with the theophany on Mount Sinai, which was elaborated with the help of parallels from the Gospels, was the transfiguration of Moses. The theme becomes more conspicuous from the fourteenth century onwards, but this may well be the culmination of a gradual development, perhaps in Eastern Samaritanism, which may then have impinged on Samaria itself in the fourteenth century. For the Samaritans from all periods the experience of Moses could only be interpreted as a mystical, other-worldly one. The radiance of his face when he descended would naturally be related to the radiance of Christ on his mountain, and it is more than likely that Christians and Samaritans on many occasions throughout history argued the respective merits of their saviours. Sinai and the Mount of Transfiguration were both occasions of communion with the other, higher world of God. The Samaritans seem to give proof of their dependence on the Christian story when they insist, almost *ad nauseam*, that there was no third person between Moses and God on Sinai. We may deduce know-

ledge of the Transfiguration of Christ from their repeated stress upon the difference between the two accounts. *Their* saviour had no intermediary (in Samaritan belief angels are not intermediaries); nor do they have anything to say about the place in the upper world of those who were once mortals (except after the Day of Judgement, of course). Their belief in a general resurrection only at the time of the judgement prevented such notions, even if they were, as we have noted, latent, even inchoate, in their system of doctrine.

Moses and Elijah—the Samaritans have only Moses—met with Jesus in a setting of radiant light. Moses and God met in and through the cloud. The cloud has distinct signification, for the idea of the cloud (obscuring the radiance of the glory) became a signal element in mystical descriptions in both the Old and the New Testament. In the New Testament story of the Transfiguration (Mark 9.2–8, etc.) ‘a cloud appeared, casting its shadow over them, and out of the cloud came a voice’, and the passage leads to the statement of what some have called an adoption. Of course this is not by any means a majority viewpoint, for the orthodox interpretation takes a different form, but the Samaritans may have held this view, since they were particularly conscious of the status of Moses in comparison with Christ.

Let us now examine briefly the Samaritan account which invites comparison with the New Testament one. The scene is set at creation; Moses the Word has pronounced the divine *fiat*. The heavenly host are marvelling at the glory manifested on that occasion. Then we read in an obscure, mystical passage that

The two stars were speaking with Moses and were visible.¹

They were advising him of his mission, showing him what he had to do on earth. The constellation (unspecified) tells Moses that the Word (Logos) has little meaning unless it becomes incarnate, and when it is incarnate it must express the divine life.

It is impossible to identify the two stars, since nothing is said that helps in this. If the Samaritan poet Abisha is really incorporating elements of the New Testament Transfiguration story, then he may well be interpreting Moses and Elijah cosmically, as Samaritans were always wont to do when religious tradition and expression did not prevent it. Certainly he puts into the Sinai experience of Moses much of what Christ experienced on the Mount of Transfiguration.

¹ As Moses and Elijah were to the disciples.

But, as one would expect when one religion comments on another, the Samaritan writer relegates the New Testament passages to a lesser status than the Christians accorded it in his day. For us the chief point of interest is the meeting of the two with Moses. Yet, as we have pointed out, the Samaritans insist and have always insisted that there was no one else on Mount Sinai, only God and Moses.

Let us remind ourselves of what the two accounts have in common. Both have Moses, radiant light, three persons, a voice, the mysterious cloud. If Abisha was to use the New Testament story to suit Samaritan purposes, then he had to remove the three-person element. This he could do by giving the story a more cosmic setting and introducing celestial forces, who could not be called persons. The religious cultic language available to Abisha enabled him to do what Abdallah and others had done to the story of Moses' birth; this was to give it an astronomical setting, which in mystical terms was a permissible practice. Had not the Christians taught of a star appearing before the birth of Jesus? Does not the Pentateuch promise the rising of a star (Num. 24.17)? The mystical setting adopted by Abisha could give no serious grounds for offence to anyone, and he was able thereby to teach along another line that Moses became incarnate (a form of transfiguration in his case) out of a cosmic setting.

We shall see now another aspect of Samaritan application of Christian teaching and note how the details of the New Testament account can be integrated, fairly successfully, into a Samaritan setting. This is in connection with the Passover and occurs in a fourteenth-century poem for Passover worship by the High Priest Phinehas. There can be no doubt that the following is one of the best examples encountered of Samaritan dependence on Christian sources, but basically warranted from the Samaritan Bible.

After speaking of the joyousness of the Passover Festival (C. pp. 189f.) he begins to speak of the feast itself and this is where the Christian reader may find himself somewhat startled.

This goodly, sacred table is spread out before you. Call in the name of the Lord.

Thus far the Preamble, and now the Invitation follows directly.

Stretch forth your hands. Taste, swallow, . . . It will bring you good and healing.

Phinehas has spoken of the bread and after a word of exhortation he proceeds to the wine. First the words of exhortation:

It is a table that is eternal, never to be cut off. Do not fear, O Israel, and do not be dismayed! For the Lord your God made covenant with your forefathers.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| The Wine | Drink a cup of goodly wine. It will give you a great joy. Drink deeply! Let your heart rejoice, as it removes your distress. |
| Thanksgiving | Sing aloud, rejoice! Give thanks to your God! Eat and drink to the full and be healed through goodly food and fine wine. Drink <i>my mysteries</i> in a very large cup. Let it be a <i>sacrificial offering</i> ! |
| The Grace | May the Lord be gracious unto you. |
| Remembrance | I Phinehas your priest, servant of the Lord, say to you, 'May you celebrate the day again continuously in your lifetime! May you all <i>remember me</i> kindly. The Lord forgive you and me.' |
| The Peace | May you celebrate the day again <i>in peace</i> , during this blessed festival of Passover, the festival of the Lord. It is that night of the Lord, to be observed by all the Israelites during their generations. |

It is at once obvious that Phinehas as priest is, as it were, 'taking the part' of Christ, and applying to the Samaritan Passover the example of Christ. The Judaist attempts of the same order are by no means such overt borrowings from Christianity. This is an amazing phenomenon, for the Passover Festival is the one religious occasion when the Samaritans have always prided themselves on being the only community (in contrast with the Judaists) to observe the Passover laws in their full strictness; and indeed to this day on Mount Gerizim the tourist may join the gathering of Muslims to watch the Samaritan celebration of Passover. How, then, could such a religious community go so far as the priestly Phinehas?

We have seen the chief elements of the Christian Eucharist in Phinehas's poem. Such parallelism could not be accounted for on the grounds of coincidence. In any case we have by now established an irrefutable case for Samaritan kinship with the Christian belief and practice.

As well as the sacrificial (hence atonement) element, there is present in the Samaritan account the element of *the mystery*, for Phinehas clearly says that by drinking out of a 'very large cup' (why 'very large' we do not now know) *his* mysteries would be received. This seems to be a sort of communion through identity, based on the offering of oneself in the act of it.

The covenantal element appears, too (cf. Luke 22.20); indeed, the mystical element in the covenant appears in other contexts in connection with Moses as the promise of the covenant fulfilled. It has to be considered a real possibility, in view of what has been said about some sort of 'apostolic succession' through the High-Priesthood, that the 'mysteries' of Phinehas have to do with the mysteries of the High Priest. These appear to be associated with communion with Moses in the unseen, and it is at this point that we may observe the real purpose in the Samaritan version of the 'act of communion'. Only future research will reveal the truth of this.

Of course, we can assume that the Samaritan account, no matter how dependent on the Christian, will find its primary warrant in the Pentateuch, and thus the blood and the bread of Ex. 12 match the wine and the bread of the New Testament rite. The other elements in the account can by various means be traced to the Samaritan Bible.

Following the Last Supper rite, we may now briefly note some clear resemblances between the Samaritan picture of Moses and the New Testament Passion story.

The most obvious example of direct dependence on the Christian teaching occurs in the continuation of Phinehas's poem for Passover. The Passover sacrifice is made to say,

Mine is the glory. I glorify myself above all my kind, I who obey my Master. By my merit may the fire not come nigh me (C. p. 191.6-).

We are immediately reminded of the Fourth Gospel; for instance

Father, the hour has come. *Glorify* thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee. For thou hast made him sovereign *over all mankind*.

I have glorified thee on earth by completing the work which thou gavest me to do (i.e. through *obeying*) (John 17.1f., 4).

Similarly 'removing the fire' has obvious affinities with 'remove this cup',¹ the cup being a figure for fire and wrath in the Old Testament.²

The second example from the Passion occurs in a very different context. We turn now to the words of Moses as he set himself for death, before he ascended to be glorified. This is found in Book V of Markah's Memar, so that we now go back in time a thousand years for expressions of thought parallel to those of the later verses of John 17. Here are the Johannine words with which to compare the thought of Markah about the 'passion' of Moses:

¹ Mark 14.36, etc.

²E.g. Jer. 25.15.

I pray for them; I am not praying for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me, because they belong to thee.

I am to stay no longer in the world, but they are still in the world, and *I am on my way to thee*. Holy Father, protect *by the power of thy name* those whom thou hast given me.

When I was with them, I protected by the power of thy name those whom thou hast given me, and kept them safe,

and so on, as Jesus prays for his people that they may be given the truth.

Markah makes Moses to express similar sentiments, for he is not praying for the world (though he is the prophet of the world), but for his own people Israel. Moses is in great grief as he thinks of his people, whom he must leave behind, as he *goes to his God*.

I depart and am going to leave you. Who will seek forgiveness for you? Who will have compassion for you after me? O people, whom I delivered, O people who were specially chosen . . . let not my uprightness perish from your midst after my death.

As for 'protecting by the power of the divine name' in the Johannine passage, we have seen that Moses the saviour came 'armed' with the divine name and by it he saved his people. There is no close parallelism in this passage in terms of verbal forms, but the thought applied to the departing saviour in both is essentially the same. The New Testament passage is much nobler in concept and conveys nothing of the pessimism that Moses is made to express in the Markah narrative.

Before we turn to a comparison between the relationship of God and Moses and of God and Jesus, we first take up the matter of close parallels in the teaching attributed to the two saviours respectively. We note that the Samaritans called Moses' teaching 'the gospel of Moses', by which they mean literally the evangel of the Word.

Abraham's worship is set forth for us in the gospel of Moses the saviour (C. p. 187.13).

The teaching contained in that 'gospel' affords many direct comparisons with the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) seems to have been known in Samaria. Let us compare the thought of Markah with that of St Matthew:

It is our duty to be a tree good to behold, crowned with goodly fruits. It does not behove us to leave ourselves like a waste land . . . or like a tree without fruits, for an end has to be made of it (Memar III.1).

Markah is expounding Deut. 20.20, but the thought as expressed closely resembles that of Matt. 7.17-19.

For a comparison with the third Beatitude, compare the following:

He who is humble will be in great glory in this world and the next (cf. Matt. 5.5).

Markah discusses the man who does not squander his goods, but recognizes the value of wisdom:

Whether in his life or in his death, his heart abides in the upper abode (Memar VI.7).

Such a man seeks the wealth of wisdom and disparages the accumulation of earthly wealth (cf. Matt. 6.21).

Praise be to the Illuminator who fills the wise with the spirit of wisdom, so that they are like lamps shining in the world and dispelling the dark (cf. Matt. 5.16).

The New Testament view of the Sabbath as opposed to the Pharisaic is perhaps reflected in the Samaritan attitude:

The worker is not wearied on the Sabbath, nor the labourer oppressed during it. Servant and master alike are sustained when they observe it. This is very much the principle of 'the Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath' as in Mark 2.27.

There are many other parallels between the words of Moses and the words of Christ, which confirm us in the belief that the Samaritans of many ages found in the New Testament teaching much that could be integrated into their own traditional and Pentateuchal-type beliefs about their own saviour.

RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

The relationship between God and Moses according to Samaritan belief and between God and Christ in the Christian may be expressed in terms of credal statements in two ways. One is that the fundamental tenets of the creed for both faiths are belief in God and belief in his apostle. The other is the statement, so often expressed in the Samaritan literature in the manner of John 14.1, that belief in Moses means belief in God's word and therefore in God. This is the New Testament position that those who believe in Christ believe in God and that those who believe in God believe in him whom he sent.

He who believes in Moses believes in his Lord (Memar IV.7).

Similarly in connection with belief in the apostle of God we have the statement (quoted on p. 151 above) that those who follow in the

footsteps of Moses will not go astray, but will serve in both worlds (i.e. eternally), with which we compared the same thought in John 8.12.

The authority possessed by Moses during his earthly mission is derived from Pentateuchal sources, but set out along New Testament lines. In this regard we have noted Markah's statement that 'Moses' speech is the speech of God' and that he is the actual doer of all that was wrought by Moses. This clearly compares with St John's statements in 7.16 and 5.26, where we read that the teaching of Jesus is not his own, but belongs to God, and that as God has life-giving power in himself, so the Son possesses it by the Father's gift. The 'giving' of such power is expressed (e.g. C. p. 433) more explicitly in the Samaritan literature, but the essential thought is the same, that God revealed life to the world through Moses and 'handed over' life to him.

Something of the life-giving quality of the saviour is seen in different terminology.

We are thirsty for the living waters (waters of life) (Memar II.1), with which we may compare John 4.14; Rev. 21.6; 22.1, 17. Expressed in terms of the activity of the saviour or prophet, we read:

This is a well of living water dug by a prophet whose like has not arisen from mankind (Memar VI.3),

with which may be compared John 4.10.

From the point of view of the attributes of the saviour or prophet, compare John 4.14 with the following:

His mouth was like the Euphrates, rolling with living waters¹ which quench the thirst of all who drink of them (Memar VI.3).

The emphasis and point of reference is about the same in both literatures. The Samaritans connected the life-giving quality of Moses' mission with the light that was in him, somewhat in the manner of St John, but extended the idea to the salvation that he wrought, salvation that was in itself life-giving.

Other aspects of the authority vested in the saviour are the possession of the divine name, an idea with which we compared Phil. 2.9-11; secret knowledge communicated during the earthly mission and derived from the pre-existent life of the apostle.

¹ Cf. Rev. 1.15.

With Eph. 3.10 may be compared the *setting* of the following with regard to (a) the communication to men of the truth, and (b) the origin of that truth:

All the powers descended on to Mount Nebo . . . while all the hosts of the hidden regions and of the revealed ones came to do honour to Moses the Man (Memar VI.3).

Similarly there is the great stress on the title 'son of his House' and 'faithful one of his House', both derived from the Pentateuch, but expressed in the same context as in the New Testament. In both religions the House of God is conceived of in universalist terms and both Jesus and Moses have a cosmic mission. Whether an adoptionist theory can be deduced is another matter, about which we must be in some doubt.

A final aspect of vested authority is found in the Samaritan idea, often quoted in the literature, that Moses was vested with divine status, without himself being divine in origin. He was created directly from the Divine One, but was himself not wholly divine. The Samaritan position is somewhat like that of Phil. 2.6, where it is said of Christ:

For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at equality with God.

The Samaritan theologian would put it slightly differently of Moses; he would prefer to say:

Possessor of the divine image, manifested in the form of man, he was obedient to his Lord and accepted death according to his will.

One central difference between the Samaritan and New Testament positions about the relationship of Moses and of Jesus to God is to be found in connection with the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans rarely use the term until the modern period, and when they do it is not in the New Testament manner. They could speak of the Spirit of God, but not directly in association with Moses. He is not normally¹ said to have possessed the Spirit of God; he was the expresser of the divine will, himself possessed of God's wisdom and power,² but not of the Spirit of God. Perhaps they felt that this would involve a belief in divinity for Moses, a step they were always unwilling, even loathe, to take. What they could say is:

The prophet whose light shines on you up to this very day.

¹ We cannot take account of rare usages peculiar to unrepresentative passages.

² Exactly as in I Cor. 1.24.

In this sense only the Samaritans accepted that men could commune with God through Moses. Moses, we could argue, has a post-earthly existence as an influence, rather than as an entity, but as we stated before he could also, like Jesus, be described as 'the way' through whom men come to know God. It may be that the Samaritans really accepted something of the 'Holy Spirit' principle, but just as they could not speak of God as Father, Moses as Son, so they avoided the notion of Holy Spirit as the 'coaeval successor' to Moses. Yet we must admit that it is difficult to see where the essential difference, if any, is between the post-historical Moses and the Christian concept of the Holy Spirit; i.e. as far as functions and influences are concerned. There are wide theological differences between the two regarding their state and essence, but in function they are closely similar.

Before glancing briefly at some personal characteristics of Moses and Jesus, let us note the place of angels in their respective missions. The Samaritans almost certainly accepted or otherwise adopted the Gospel statement that the saviour was ministered to by angels, but there is plentiful biblical warrant for such a belief, for Moses received his commission from an angel of God (Ex. 3.2). In the later Samaritan belief (though it may also have been early) angels play an important role in the lifetime of Moses, a subject which has been noted separately. We have noted the appearance of angels at Moses' birth, their presence at cosmic events like creation, the Sinai theophany and the death and ascension of Moses. With these may be compared the angelic appearances heralding Christ's birth, the upper-worldly appearances at the Transfiguration, the appearances of an angel or angels at the tomb of Jesus. It would be fair to say that of all religious literature from the Near East none has anything like so much to say about the role of angels (even if they rarely play an active part in events) as the New Testament and Samaritan literatures. For both, angels belong to the realm of God, lower themselves than God, higher than men, and they can descend into the material world on certain occasions.

In the overall scheme of God for the world's salvation there are different orders or dispensations. Moses in the Samaritan view of universal history initiated a new era, a new dispensation of favour, for he wrought salvation and prepared the way for the perfect world to come. Adam before the fall was perfect (*in essence*); after the fall he descended to a lesser status and lost his purely spiritual status. Moses

was the second Adam¹ and brought new life to the world, that life being the pure state of being that was the life of God. Can Markah and others have been influenced by the thought underlying I Cor. 15.45, where the comparison between the first Adam and the second is expressed similarly?

The first man, Adam, became an animate being, whereas the last Adam has become a life-giving spirit.

The teaching of St Paul here is that the physical precedes the spiritual, but in vv. 48f. we have expressions that are typical of the writing of Markah, for St Paul speaks of the man made of dust as the *pattern* (= Samaritan 'form') of all men of dust, and teaches that as we have worn (= Samaritan 'have been vested with')² the likeness (= Samaritan 'image') of the man made of dust, so we shall wear the likeness of the heavenly man. The Samaritan way of teaching this truth travels along a different path, but the essential thought is the same, that the light that is in man may be so inferior in its degree of manifestation that such a man may be little more than an animal; i.e. he is just an animate being. But when his light radiates at ever-increasing degrees he becomes like Moses and thus other than earthly. The Samaritans do not exactly say that a man will become 'heavenly' in his form (though they would probably assent to this); what they usually aver is that a man will become highly illumined and radiant, in which sense a man evolves to a state where he can only live in a state of purity and bliss, which we would describe as a heavenly state.

In another setting the Samaritans speak of Moses as the third Adam, Noah being the second. Thus Noah initiated a new dispensation, a physical one of purity, but Moses initiated a spiritual dispensation. In this sense we may refer to St Paul's comparison. Whether the Samaritan Moses is called the second or the third Adam, he is the ideal expression of the new Adam, the godly man, a thought that could have been derived from the New Testament teaching, but even here there is possible Pentateuchal warrant for the Samaritans, in that Deut. 34.10 speaks of Moses having no like. He was unique and therefore not of the type of ordinary men. But it is likely that the Samaritans developed the Pauline concept or a similar one, having a sure foundation in the Law.

¹ Cf. also C. p. 581.12-13.

² The Aramaic and Hebrew root for this verb being *lbš*, the root which produces the ordinary verb meaning 'to wear'.

We observe some of the personal characteristics displayed by Moses and Jesus that are related directly to their spiritual status and commission, i.e. characteristics that are not of the physical order. These may seem obvious, perhaps too obvious for mention, but for the sake of completeness we should at least point them out. First there is the characteristic of supreme obedience to and acquiescence in the will of God. There are so many parallels of thought and expression in the two literatures that we need not quote directly. It is enough to observe the nature of that obedience. In both faiths the thought is not of a servile being doing what he has been told. The man of God in Samaritanism and Christianity came to the earth for a purpose and that purpose was to convey God's will for men. The success of the respective missions depended on the conveying of that will, even when hostility and danger had to be faced. Perhaps something of the same thought applies to the commission and mission of Jeremiah, who could be called a successor of Moses and forerunner of Christ, but in Samaritan thought as in the teaching of the New Testament the nature of the obedience was rooted in the divine origin of the man of God. Christianity goes much further than Samaritanism in ascribing full divinity to Christ (though by no means all Christians have done so); Samaritanism offers a lesser status to Moses, but within the human context both are described as servant of God; both minister to men for God. God speaks; they act. But they *know* within themselves what God speaks. The will of God was innate in them and although there was at times, in both cases, a conflict between the divine will and the human will, yet the human will remained subsidiary and subservient. Thus we see the nature of the obedience; the human will is overridden by the divine.

This situation is admittedly an obvious one to any student of Christianity, but he must remember that all we have said cannot apply, e.g., to the prophet of Islam. There we have a different order of things. Muhammad was wholly subservient to God; he surrendered the rights of the human will. The divine replaced, at times apparently displaced, the human. Muhammad did not possess the divine will in an innate way. He relied entirely for his mission on the revelation through an angel. Moses and Christ spoke with God, but their *person* was permeated by the divine will and only at times did they need to consult God by their own volition.

So Moses pleased God in all that he did. He expressed the divine will. Markah puts it thus:

Honoured be the great prophet Moses, whose mind reflected what pleased God (Memar IV.7).

In a fourteenth-century tradition we read in an inchoate baptism-rite of Moses that the divine voice spoke, saying, 'This is my beloved servant in whom I am well pleased.' The New Testament parallel¹ uses 'Son' for 'servant', of course, but the pleasing of God derives from the nature of the obedience manifested throughout the mission.

Other characteristics of Moses that are stressed are those of perfection and holiness. We cannot say much about the second from the evidence available in print; another difficulty is that the Hebrew word for 'holy' (*qādōš*) is used also of priests, of the congregation of the elect, of the tabernacle and its appurtenances. On the first, however, the Samaritans of the Roman period seem to have held to the same concept of perfection as that found in parts of the New Testament. In passing it may be suggested here that by 'holiness' the Samaritans include the concept of 'perfection'. What is holy and therefore 'wholly other' must be perfect in essence.

It has been thought that the Epistle to the Hebrews, like the theological writings of Markah and Amram Darah, shows traces of Gnostic influence, in that perfection is a concept much liked by the Gnostics. What seems to have been meant by the term is 'ultimate in state', and for this we need not really look to Gnostic influence. The Samaritan evidence throws an other than Gnostic light on the concept, with the help of which we may re-examine the concept in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The idea comes into relief when we think of the unreal world, this earthly life, in distinction from the real world of the beyond. Amram Darah uses the term 'perfect' a great deal to describe the works of God as being in their ultimate and ideal state. There is nothing, no element, no aspect, no degree, no level lacking, for perfection means totality and wholeness. It is possible to attain perfection through growth, but it is more directly achieved through change. The chief exhortation of Christianity and Samaritanism is to change, while Judaism and Islam appeal rather to obedience or submission. Of course, the latter can lead to the former course, but the emphasis is different. In our study here we do not appeal to the top rung of a ladder or the end of a chain; we look directly to the 'otherness' of God. For the Samaritans, the priesthood and the tabernacle are like nothing instituted by man. Their real, their ultimate place is in the world of perfection, which is beyond human

¹ Mark 1.11 (Matt. 3.17; Luke 3.22; cf. John 1.34).

perception and experience. Amram Darah and Markah use the idea of perfection to describe Moses, the Law, the ideal world, the priesthood, the tabernacle, God himself. It would be true to say that in this the Samaritans go very near to attributing divinity to Moses, but there is more than perfection in divinity. Unfortunately the Samaritans have not indicated for us what they thought belonged to divinity other than perfection.

These are some of the chief points of comparison between Moses and Jesus. No claim to completeness is made here, for obviously this can only be attained after much more detailed and prolonged study. We complete our series of comparisons with a reference to the last days and death and ascension of Moses and Jesus, a section that will help to round off the series in terms of the cosmic nature of their missions.

DEATH, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

As Jesus died on the cross there occurred a sort of cataclysm. The Synoptic Gospels present the picture of darkness coming over the land and an earthquake. St Matthew presents the more graphic picture, including elements of the cataclysm not found in the other Gospels. He mentions the darkness coming over the land and also the earthquake, but he elaborates the latter by the additional details of rocks splitting, graves opening, and 'many of God's people arose from sleep, coming out of their graves' and so on.

Thus a cataclysmic happening is directly associated with the death of Christ. When we look at the Samaritan story of the death of Moses, we find a cosmic situation directly associated. In the Samaritan case, when God showed Moses all the land (Deut. 34.1) heaven and earth 'were in fear', the cosmic setting for the death of the lord of the world. The death of Moses is associated with certain calamities that happened (Memar V.4). Here is what Markah writes:

. . . Moses who by his death wrought great sorrows which can never be estimated. The *sun* of divine favour has been *hidden away*. . .

Though Markah does not seem to present a picture closely equivalent to the Gospel accounts ('the darkness' is common to both), he does refer to cataclysmic happenings in connection with the Sinai experience of Moses, happenings based on the biblical description. Perhaps he merely elaborates the Pentateuchal description; perhaps he was influenced by the New Testament description, though not as far as

resurrected men are involved—there could only be the general resurrection. Markah's cosmic picture of the Sinai events includes earthquakes, thunder and lightning. There were present 'hosts and powers and principalities and angels'.

We have already noted the Passion experience of Moses before his death, which came to resemble the Passion of Christ. Other aspects of the death and ascension of Moses do not closely match the New Testament narrative, and it must not be thought that because the Samaritans were so much indebted to Christian ideas they made their Moses into another Christ. Far from it! For example, no attempt was made to borrow from the Resurrection account of the New Testament. Perhaps the early Samaritan belief in the Taheb prevented such borrowing, for the Taheb was to be Moses *reborn*, hardly resurrected. There is no close parallel in the Samaritan teachings to the Resurrection of Christ. There is, however, very close resemblance between the Samaritan and New Testament pictures of the general resurrection, about which we have spoken.

There is therefore no resurrection experience for Moses between his death and ascension. What has already been said about the ascension of Moses indicates the New Testament influence on the Samaritans, for Markah describes his entry into the cloud (as on Sinai rather than Nebo) almost exactly in the words of Acts 1.9. The ascension in both accounts was really an assumption, for the apostle of God was 'taken back' into the real world from which he came.

One point of similarity in the two ascension accounts is that both Moses and Jesus gave a blessing before ascending, Moses to the Israelites, Jesus to the apostles (Luke 24.50). It is interesting that in the New Testament account of the ascension the words 'and was carried up into heaven' (Luke 24.51) are found only in the western manuscripts. Trotter has shown in his study¹ of the Epistle to the Hebrews that the early Samaritan writers may have been acquainted with eastern, not western manuscripts.

The account in Acts, also by St Luke, is, however, explicit on the subject of the assumption; this account has often been compared with the assumption of Elijah (II Kings 2). In both of these accounts the problem remains: where did the body go? The Samaritans do not have this problem, for they assert that the body of Moses was left in a cave, while his spirit departed from it. Thus after his earthly existence Moses is spirit, not body. The Samaritans have no interest

¹ *Did the Samaritans of the Fourth Century know the Epistle to the Hebrews?*

in the temporary body of the saviour of Israel, only in his soul continuing to exist and minister on their behalf in higher places.

We cannot discuss here the problem of what happened to the physical body of Jesus, but we note the divergence between the Samaritan and New Testament descriptions of the aftermath of the death of their respective saviours, for this serves to remind us, despite our comparisons, that Samaritanism is very far from being a religion reshaped after the pattern of Christianity.

SECOND COMING AND AFTER-LIFE

In this final section we shall do no more than take brief note of the similar features of Samaritan and New Testament beliefs, which we have already discussed more fully in the chapter on the ideal world.

First of all, be it noted that the Samaritans never say that Moses will come back again, at least not in the sense that the same person will return. What they do is to imply the identification of Moses with the Taheb, the restorer. They cannot identify the *person* of the two, because the functions of the latter are in the main entirely different from those of the former, although there is common ground to be found, as we have shown, between them. That common ground begins with the statement that God *raised up* Moses (the origin of this being Deut. 18.15), a statement quoted by St Peter in Acts 3.22 in connection with the return of Jesus. St Luke tells us in verse 21 that

He must be received into heaven until the time of universal *restoration* comes.

This is similar to the Samaritan belief about the Taheb or *Moses redivivus*. Moses' soul returned to God at his death and he was to be reborn as Taheb for the restoration. The only serious difference is that the Samaritans did not regard the Taheb as wholly identical with Moses.

The favourite Samaritan expression 'being raised up' (e.g. for the Day of Resurrection) is also found in St John's Gospel in the same connection. In 6.40 it is stated that the faithful shall possess eternal life and *be raised up* on the last day. So also in v. 44. In v. 55 the unique communion with Christ involves his raising up on the last day those who commune with him by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Being 'raised up' for the resurrection involves great cataclysmic happenings in the world according to the teaching of the

Samaritans and of the New Testament. In both the man of God is to play an important part. The Samaritans never say that Moses will directly be responsible for the raising up, for they do not like to identify the historical Moses with the post-earthly figure too overtly. But the Taheb is to come (Moses' second coming in a sense) and prepare the way. When all is in order, when the enemies of God have been destroyed, when the true community is restored, the resurrection will take place. These things have been discussed in dealing with eschatological matters. Here it is enough to point out that the Second Coming of Christ involves much the same as the Advent of the Taheb. So in Acts 3.21 we find mention of the time of resurrection, the time when in the Second Coming, Jesus will restore—precisely what the Taheb will do.

In the judgement itself, for which all men are *raised up*, both Moses and Jesus act, but there is a difference. Moses is not to judge as Christ is to judge; he will make intercession of the God who alone will judge. This difference is, of course, typical of the Samaritan point of view, for Moses is not God nor is he an emanation of God. He cannot represent God in ultimate things that belong to the decision of God's will; he can but lead men to God. God alone created; God alone will judge. On this the Samaritans were firm. Even under the pressures of Christianity and Islam (the latter, too, had traditions about Muhammad as judge on the last day), they refused to treat Moses as judge.

After the judgement, when some go to hell, some to heaven—the Samaritan and New Testament pictures are similar in many respects—Moses, like Jesus, will be central in the new life. It is possible that the Samaritans were indebted to the Book of the Revelation for some of their ideas, or at least their imagery, about Moses in the after-life, for there are many close parallels in Samaritan writings to that New Testament book. In Abisha's Dream he sees Moses 'the faithful one over all God's House', while St John sees Jesus 'the faithful and true witness' (3.14). Moses plays the part of heavenly intercessor for men; Jesus 'pleads our cause' with the Father (I John 2.1). St Paul has the same belief (Rom. 8.34), that the glorified Christ is man's intercessor in heaven.

Markah often places a mystical value on the Sinai theophany and relates that other-worldly experience of Moses to his heavenly experience. That was the kind of thing Moses naturally experienced, being who and what he was. In his description of that eternal figure, living

in a glorified state, he uses imagery that reminds us particularly of Rev. 1.15. Here are the parallel passages:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Memar VI.5 | His mouth was (is) like the Euphrates, rolling with living waters . . . |
| Rev. 1.15 | His voice was like the sound of rushing waters. |

Another aspect of the eternal figure of the saviour in heaven reflects the New Testament and Samaritan belief in an eternal High Priest. In the glorious picture of the hereafter we see him responsible over all the House of God as a priest. Aaron and his sons, in their ideal existence, actually perform the priestly functions, but we have shown how prophet and priest combine in Moses. He is the supreme High Priest in the hereafter as Jesus is according to the statement of Heb. 5.10; 6.20. Indeed, the general picture of the Epistle to the Hebrews in this regard is remarkably close to the Samaritan. The Epistle has the Day of Atonement as its background and that was the Festival supreme for the Samaritans, particularly for the High Priest. For the Samaritans as for the Epistle (10.21) there is a great priest over the House of God, so that men may draw near with sincerity and assurance to the throne of God.

It is interesting that Markah should describe the eternal Moses in a manner so similar to the writer of the Epistle:

Moses, the faithful one of [God's] House, who dwelt among the angels in the sanctuary of the unseen. . . . He was a holy priest in two sanctuaries.

The Epistle's interest in the tabernacle—not the Temple, and so precisely the Samaritan position—and the High-Priesthood in connection with Christ may well have stimulated Samaritan thinking about the eternal Moses in heaven. The emphasis on the tabernacle would suit the Samaritans well, for in the Sinai theophany Moses, we read, was shown a pattern of the ideal tabernacle on which the earthly one was to be based. The Samaritans read into that description that the eternal Moses had perfect knowledge of all things in heaven and that he belonged with them in the eternal state. Thus he was the overseer and priest of the heavenly tabernacle.

There are many other matters to which our attention could be drawn with regard to Jesus and Moses, but the general outlines of the chief points of close comparison have been drawn. Other writers may be able to devote more space to this one subject and thus greatly improve our knowledge of Samaritan indebtedness to Christianity.

What we have chiefly shown is that both figures were thought of in cosmic terms and that their earthly ministry has to be seen within that wider setting. Moses and Christ were with God in the beginning, were in communion and communication with him during their earthly life, and were fully restored to their glorified state after death, there to abide for evermore, still lord over the House of God.

XXIII

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SAMARITAN RELIGION

A FINAL ASSESSMENT [here of the Samaritan religion can do little more than bring together the various statements already made throughout the earlier chapters, and any reliable assessment must take account of the three stages of that religion's development. Notice has been taken of these and we may summarize briefly here. The first period, the Golden Age of literature and religion, was the age of the Targum, of Amram Darah the formulator of the doctrine of God, of Markah the great thinker and exegete. It was through Markah more than through any other writer that religious and philosophical concepts were welded together. It was through him that Gnostic and Neo-Platonic and Stoic notions were 'put in their place' in the theological system. He it was who set out the great tradition of the story of the Exodus, wherein the modern student can see the survival to a degree of the old E stratum of the Pentateuch.

The second period, the Silver Age of literature and religion, saw the incoming of the Eastern Samaritan christological tradition. At this time there was a considerable revival in Samaritanism. The Hebrew language was restored to full religious use and the Liturgy greatly expanded. Here we find many of Markah's concepts again expressed, this time within a wider framework of ecclesiastical formulae.

The third period, a period of decline, began about the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. It was the time when Islamic beliefs found their way into liturgical and exegetical works. Family names became Arabic ones. Most of the literature of this period was in Arabic. Old ideas suffered further modification in an Islamic direction. From the mid-eighteenth century onwards Samaritan beliefs may be said to have become fossilized.

Before making an assessment of Samaritanism as it moved from period to period, it must be remembered that it is a religion whose

theology is closely linked with the interpretation of history. Already in the Golden Age we see the cosmic outlook. Israel is not the be-all and end-all of creation. Israel exists to shed light among the nations. The light that is in all men burns more brightly among the Samaritan Israelites because of their possession of the means of grace, which mark them out among the nations of the world as the elect of God. Unlike Judaism, which grew out of the same matrix, Samaritanism did not conceive of itself as the final product of creation. Rather did it see itself as God's medium for the salvation of the whole human race. The plan of human salvation had been initiated in Adam; the light in his image was the light that enlightens every man. From him until the end of the world God's purposes were being worked out through the righteous of the world, those whose light radiated more brightly than that of others. These righteous men were Israelites, because it was Israel who possessed the means of grace that made it possible for the light to radiate most brightly.

Distinctive of Samaritanism, too, is the closely worked out historical plan, whereby Noah became the *new man*, the first man of the new dispensation. The world had gone astray between the first man and the second. Nevertheless, God's plan did not change; it merely manifested itself in a new environment. From Noah to the final revelation in Moses was a period of divine favour, when purity reigned, during which the plan of God, the stage of election, worked out. In this Abraham became the progenitor of the race that was to produce the elect people. His son Isaac produced two sons, one of whom was chosen to be the progenitor of the elect part of that nation. Thus Jacob Israel represents the last of a line, the line of the Patriarchs, and the beginning of a new line, the line of the elect.

Now it was possible for God's Man to reveal the full import of the divine covenant. Now it was possible for Israel, the now finally elect nation, to receive God's instructions. The new nation was provided with its charter of behaviour in the world. From now on God's plan, at the revelatory level, was complete. It would continue to be worked out in the life and witness of Israel until the Day of Judgement. Then in the fullness of time the results of that divine plan could be assessed.

In all this Samaritan Israel expressed the will of God in the world. The divine plan of salvation was not for them alone; it was for the world. The elect nation, equipped with the marks of election and the higher teaching as well as the means of grace, had the responsibility to lead the nations in God's way as revealed through Moses in the

Law. Thus on the day of final assessment all men were to be given a fair judgement. If Samaritanism had a serious weakness as a coherent system of belief, it was that it did not have enough to say about the place of the non-Israelite in the consummation at the end of time. Too much place was given to the elect themselves, so that we are led to assume that the reward of the Israelites is greater than that of other righteous men. At least a place was found in the scheme of rewards for the non-Israelite. On the other hand, we have stated in other chapters that it may be that anyone who became righteous through the ministry of Israel would automatically become an Israelite—circumcised, observing Sabbath, obedient to the revealed Law. If this assumption is correct, and it is nowhere explicitly stated, then our judgement on Samaritanism cannot be harsh, but we would have wished to find Samaritan teachers clearly state their position on this crucial point. Like Christianity, Samaritanism seems to have left open the question of universal salvation, so that one finds but few direct references. It is possible that in the Middle Ages it was Christian influence as well as that of Islam that closed the door against the development of this line of thought. Certain it is that in the period after the sixteenth century Samaritanism became more and more fossilized, so that our judgement on modern Samaritanism is a judgement on something that has become sealed and in which no more development is possible.

The next point on which to give a verdict is that Samaritanism throughout most of its known history safeguarded itself against false doctrine and extraneous and alien influences by ever seeking biblical warrant for new ideas or developments of old ideas. We have no way of knowing how many such ideas passed through the gates of Samaritan belief; what we do know is that up to the fourteenth century at least no concept found a niche in Samaritanism's stout walls unless it had the support of the Pentateuch. In our assessment of the procedure adopted in the finding of biblical warrant lies the problem of Samaritan exegesis. Little is yet known of the history of this practice. Fortunately we are likely to have a critical work on the subject in the near future, when S. Lowy, a colleague of the present writer, completes his examination of all the exegetical works available.

The second subject for assessment is the extent of Samaritan indebtedness to other religions. It has been maintained throughout this book and for the first time that Samaritanism did not develop in its formative stage with the help of any religion but Christianity.

There are several factors to be brought to bear on this claim, aside from the many examples of such dependence quoted in the earlier chapters. First, there is the fact that the Samaritans never speak critically in their writings of Christianity, at least never in the earliest period when Christian influence was at work. Chronicle II, as we have stated, reveals the extent of Samaritan knowledge of early Christian literature. It has nothing critical to say about it, whereas the same Chronicle in listing early Judaist literature (in the Old Testament) is far from complimentary. It is to be remembered also that it was in Samaria that Jesus Christ had his first success on the community scale. The Samaritans, or at least a group of them, were the first to see in him one sent by God.

It has to be borne in mind, furthermore, that the Christian literature that most influenced the Samaritans was the most philosophical literature in the New Testament. By 'philosophical' here is meant systematized doctrine incorporating theory. Hence the Gospel of St John and the Epistle to the Hebrews were by far the most influential. Some reflections of other New Testament literature, notably the writings of St Paul, may mean only that that literature most reflected the ideological environment of the Samaritans. Hence we look to those parts of the New Testament that have the most to say about angels, about principalities and powers, about resurrection and judgement. In these matters the Samaritans held beliefs similar to those expressed in the New Testament; it is perhaps more than likely that they and the early (Judaean) Christians shared a common heritage of ideology. But when we examine the Samaritan indebtedness to St John and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews we enter into a different set of circumstances. Here we are dealing manifestly with ideological thinking. The Samaritans were influenced primarily by the philosophy of St John. He is 'quoted' far more often than any other New Testament writer. The Epistle to the Hebrews dealt with the topics of greatest interest to the Samaritans, at a time when Christianity was expanding beyond Judaea. The comparison between Moses and Christ in the Epistle could not have failed to interest the Samaritans.

There is no need to repeat what has been said in the previous chapter. The comparative material there speaks for itself, and even that is but a fragment of all that could be written on the subject. As far as early Christian influence is concerned, it was the doctrine of Moses that was the most affected. This is not to say that only that doctrine was affected, for we have noted how Christological con-

troversies, especially those that came to a head in the early part of the fourth century, caused a reaction among the Samaritans. The whole position of Moses and his relationship to God was worked out then, and the position never changed. The only qualification we must make to this statement is that Eastern Samaritanism went a long way towards ascribing to Moses almost everything the Christians claimed for Christ, but even then they never reached the position of asserting that Moses was God's son or even that he was wholly divine. Here, we may say, is a tribute to the consistency of the Samaritan doctrine. Despite the tremendous ideological (and in the East political!) pressures on them to improve their claims for their sole prophet and saviour, they did not yield in the least to their confident declaration of the *absolute* oneness of God.

Thus we cannot find anywhere in their religious literature a mention of God as Father (contrast the position of the Epistle to the Hebrews), nor of Moses as son (contrast the Epistle's otherwise very similar statements about Jesus as the 'Son of God's House'). Likewise we find no doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Even in the modern period when the 'holy spirit' has replaced the light as the illumining element in man, there is no hint of formulation of a doctrine. To this day Samaritanism holds unyieldingly to the statement of Deut. 6.4 that there is only one God.

Perhaps our assessment of the Samaritan success in resisting any idea of dualism of spirit and matter, any notion of a trinity within a godhead, is to be attributed to the fact that no biblical warrant could be found for it. One wonders what would have been the outcome if there had been some biblical statement that allowed the Samaritans scope on the question of Moses and divine status. Perhaps Samaritanism would have moved so close to the Christian position that the only difference between the two religions would have been a difference in the name and person of their respective saviours!

It is obvious that some beliefs with Christian affinities were slower to emerge in Samaritan religious thought than others. For example, the belief in the general resurrection did not take firm hold in Samaritanism until comparatively late times. Again we may look to the questions of biblical warrant. Perhaps the earlier exegetes did not conclude that there was such support from the Law, but it is clear that in the mediaeval era Samaritan exegetes found all the support they needed. It could be that the belief had crept into Samaritan thinking between the first and second periods under

Christian and Islamic pressures, and only when the belief had become prevalent was the need to search for the biblical position on the subject fully realized. On the whole, however, we can adjudge that ideas jostled together in the minds of Samaritan thinkers over long periods before any formulation took place. In the future, as our knowledge increases, it may be possible to ascertain how and when various beliefs developed. We may feel sure that the Samaritans centred on the traditional ancestral sites around Mount Gerizim were much less prone to accept new motions under the influence of Christians or Muslims, while Samaritans situated elsewhere would find it much easier to accept ideas that were akin to their own. Such would have been the case in Damascus and other large cities of the Near East. From Damascus came many Christian traditions and concepts. Some of these became permanently lodged in the Samaritan Liturgy. Most of these had to do with the person and work of Moses. We have seen how closely parallel such traditions and concepts are to the Christian counterparts.

It is interesting that there are no clear signs of any dependence on Persian religion. The suggestion made before that the Persian concept of light and darkness in opposition may have influenced Judaists and Samaritans alike can be no more than a suggestion. There is no proof of it. Even more interesting—and surprising to many readers, no doubt—is the fact that *the Samaritans did not borrow from Judaism*. The present writer has searched long and diligently for a single example of an idea or concept that is typically Judaist that came over into Samaritanism. It is certain that many beliefs fundamental to early Judaism were fundamental also to early Samaritanism, but after all both evolved ultimately from Pentateuchal religion. We can see the parting of the ways from the time of Ezra onwards. Judaism as we know it today developed continuously from his day, while Samaritanism took a different path. There is an immense difference between Rabbinic Judaism and Samaritanism. One cannot find the same difference between the latter and Christianity. *Samaritanism, indeed, reads in a great many respects like a half-way point between Israelite religion and Christianity.*

On the other hand, there are many points of close contact between the Samaritan religion and the beliefs of some of the more heterodox Judaist sects. Mention has already been made of Karaite Judaism and the sectarians of the Dead Sea Qumran community. To the writer this implies that all these religious groups inherited concepts

(from the same ideological environment) that did not develop in Rabbinic Judaism. However, it has to be remembered that Rabbinic Judaism comprises a veritable host of concepts that can hardly be classed together under the term 'normative'. Thus almost every Samaritan belief is encountered somewhere in the vast undisciplined army of Rabbinic assertions. What makes Samaritanism and Judaism so different, despite their common ancestry—an ancestry going back to a time long before the compilation of any part of the Pentateuch—is that the former developed into a well-formulated and integrated system of beliefs, while the latter's formulated beliefs are largely those of the Old Testament, the remaining beliefs being an uncoordinated, unsystematized whole.

We may state with confidence that the Gnostic terminology inherited by the Samaritans up to Markah's time continued to be in use for over a thousand years, without the implications of that terminology ever stepping forth through the gateway of Samaritan belief. God is 'the Power', but 'power' is no emanation of God. The Law, as God himself, is 'Truth', but 'truth' is no emanation of God. God remains one, not a unity of attributes. He is not an integration of forces or co-ordinates or functions. If we may make some allowance on the grounds of literary and liturgical licence, we can find no true Gnosticism in the Samaritan religion at all.

Neo-Platonic (or even Platonic) and Stoic ideas are found integrated into the religious formulations, and this has worked out fairly well. Here we may offer a tribute to the Samaritan thinkers, in that they could develop many Pentateuchal ideas about God, man and the world along philosophical lines. We could have wished that every writer, including Markah, had been consistent in his integration of religious and philosophical ideas, but again religious requirements have always been the most potent influence in the evolution of Samaritanism, and Pentateuchal terminology tended to remain even when philosophical reasoning was being applied, with the result that there is at times, especially in the didactic poems of the Liturgy, some disharmony of ideological expression.

We may praise, too, the integration of lay thinking into the priestly. Here Markah stands forth as the finest example of one who could impregnate the ecclesiastical viewpoint with what must have seemed to many priests secularist ideas. Particularly in the doctrine of man do we find Markah's influence at its greatest. Lay influence was indeed so marked that Markah, ever venerated by his successors,

could speak of self-salvation in the same breath as national salvation. Perhaps this was the greatest single contribution that Markah made to the religion. He could find plenty of Deuteronomic warrant for his ideas about a man saving himself, and it is possible that his teaching prevented Samaritanism from becoming particularist like Judaism and to a degree Christianity. Though the Samaritans never went so far in explicit terms as Muslims in their concept of universal brotherhood through common submission to God, yet they did find room for what may be termed the consummation of Deuteronomic teaching.

If Samaritanism had followed the path trod by Amram Darah and the later priestly writers, it would have been a religion fully as theocentric as Islam. That it did not is due to the christological teaching (traceable to Markah) of Eastern Samaritanism. The emigrants from Damascus brought with them a strongly marked christocentric teaching, which probably filled a void in Western (priestly) Samaritanism. If this deduction is correct, then the marriage of East and West was a highly successful one. It is regrettable that the modern position represents a regression to the position of Western Samaritanism in the thirteenth century.

One great factor in the influence of Eastern Samaritanism was undoubtedly the incipient teaching about communion with Moses after the fashion of the Christian belief about communion with Christ 'the great Priest' in heaven who ever intercedes on behalf of sinful men. We have noted the shift in the teaching about the Pass-over meal that came through eastern influence. Another element in the same field was the development of a belief in personal communion with Moses in the unseen world. One of the forms this took was in the realm of High-Priestly authority. This, too, we have noted, but the idea did not remain for long, mainly because the High-Priesthood died out and with it the belief in authority derived from the secret teaching of Moses, a belief that had been in existence no less than eleven hundred years to our knowledge. The incipient belief in communion between the High Priest and Moses died out and there is no trace in modern Samaritanism of such a concept of authority. Authority has now become restricted solely to the Law. The full cycle has been reached; things are much as they were a very long time ago.

Lastly, we may assess the Samaritan position regarding the field of eschatological beliefs. The basic elements in these are the same in

essence as those found in early Judaism and in the New Testament. However, we must look to Islamic influence from the fourteenth century on for the renovation of the whole Samaritan outlook on eschatology. It is not that Islam actually changed the direction of belief about the end of the world; it is rather that under Islamic influence there came about a re-emphasis on certain aspects of it. It is possible that Islam contributed a few elements by way of detail, and the imagery in the later period took on an Islamic style. Samaritanism did not, however, adopt the more sensual elements of the Islamic Paradise any more than it followed Judaism in applying fantasy to the activity of the angels in the judgement procedure. Nor did the Samaritans go the whole way with the Muslims in their descriptions of the fire that is to burn the condemned unrighteous. The fire figures more prominently in the Islamic era literature, but again we must speak of re-emphasis rather than a shift in the direction of belief. After all, the imagery of the fire is quite prominent in the New Testament. It is possible to argue for Eastern Christian influence in the realm of eschatology, but this is more difficult to demonstrate. Out of Damascus came long controversies originating in Judaism and Christianity alike, but the ready acceptance in Nablus of the outcome of the eschatological controversies suggests Islamic influence in the West itself. It is far from certain that Eastern Samaritans brought with them to Nablus Christian notions in the field of eschatology.

Some indication that it was Islamic rather than Christian influence that brought about increasing emphasis on the subject of the end of the world comes from the fact that along with this came more and more stress on the unseen world and the metaphysical exercises associated with contemplation of that realm. This subject was one that was current in mediaeval Islamic philosophy, more so than in mediaeval Christian philosophy, though admittedly either philosophy could have impressed the Samaritans.

However, the Samaritan belief in the Taheb and the Second Kingdom owes little to Islam. Christianity or Judaism may have contributed the Gog-Magog legend, though Islam has it, too. Islam may well have contributed the 'Standing' imagery in connection with the period between the Resurrection and the Judgement. Either Christianity or Islam could have been responsible for the teaching about the Intercession, but Samaritanism was able to go its own way once it had established the idea (long before) that the

Taheb was *Moses redivivus*. There is no possibility of Samaritan dependence on the Judaist Messiah, the Christian Second Return or the Islamic Mahdi beliefs.

To assess the Samaritan development in the eschatological field is no easy task. There are too many possibilities and probabilities. We may, however, assess the end product of the development. It was a coherent and well-integrated system at the end. The story of the last days is a skilful and harmonious blending of ideological concepts that may have come from either or both of the sister religions. Christianity did not formulate a similarly systematic belief about the end. Islam did develop out of the Koran a cohesive system, but it went much further than Samaritanism, and there is much in it that the Samaritans did not allow to creep into their own beliefs. Thus we conclude that the Samaritans were influenced a little by both Christianity and Islam, but the basic elements of the eschatology of all three religions are similar. Samaritan development was a matter chiefly of shifting emphases.

Side by side with the influences we have just mentioned there developed a certain hardening of the doctrines of God, Moses and man. This hardening seems to have become complete by the middle of the eighteenth century and only a very few writers after that, chiefly liturgists, had anything to contribute that was new. The word 'fossilizing' has been used; this is the outcome of something like two and a half millennia of development.

Apart from the task of describing the Samaritan beliefs about God, Moses, man and the world, the next world, beliefs which have only been presented before in the most cursory manner and chiefly without quotations, this writer has tried to present two important aspects of Samaritanism that have almost totally been ignored so far. One of these is the belief about an after-life of a spiritual order, in which the ideal Israel might live and serve God in ideal circumstances.

The other is the Samaritan development of a christology applied to the person and work of Moses. This, in the opinion of the writer, is so important for the understanding of this hitherto misunderstood and neglected religion that it has been thought necessary to finish the whole work with a final reminder of what Samaritanism is. It is not a variant of Judaism. It is not heterodox or unorthodox Judaism. It is Israelite religion developed over two thousand five hundred years, with some aid from the Greek philosophies and, after the advent of Christianity, with considerable help from Christian teachings.

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